

WELCOME CLASS OF 2027!



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NEWS

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New student gallery sparks controversy.
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‘Berg gives out more bucks

By KEANNA PEÑA
MANAGING EDITOR

Effective this academic school year, the Office of Financial Aid increased student wages for all students who work an on-campus job. The new minimum wage is now \$9.25, \$1.25 more than in previous years (\$8/hour). Meg Ryan, vice president for enrollment management and Greg Mitton, director of financial aid, explained that “It had been several years since the pay rates for student employment were increased, a situation that warranted review.” The committee created to address this issue includes representatives from the Office of Financial Aid, the Business Office and Human Resources. However, it must be stated

that the desire to increase student wages didn’t begin with the College administration. The Student Government Association (SGA) created an Ad Hoc committee in the Spring of 2022 centered on finding a way to increase wages. In addition, previously published articles in The Muhlenberg Weekly, Ava Dusik’s ‘23 “Let’s add some green to Muhlenberg’s colors” and Cydney Wilson’s ‘23 “The eight dollar question” expressed the overwhelming frustration from the student body regarding student wages. According to Ryan and Mitton, “The committee had started our work at the same time that we heard from the Ad-Hoc SGA committee on student wages. We met with the SGA committee a few times while doing this

work to hear their questions and concerns while we worked to a solution.” Matan Kogen ‘23, previous SGA member and chair of SGA’s committee to raise student wages, says “Before our committee got to work, there had not been a review since 2015 or 2016.” Kogen oversaw a team of nine students conducting research into student wages across Pennsylvania campuses, living wages across Lehigh Valley, and a recent history of student wages at Muhlenberg. “We used this information to create recommendations for our partners in the administration,” says Kogen. According to a living wage calculator developed by the Massachusetts Institute of

Technology, the current poverty wage for those living in the Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton area is \$6.53/hour, while the living wage is \$16.74/hour. While \$9.25 is greater than \$8, as stated in Wilson’s article, “Muhlenberg students are paid significantly closer to the poverty wage than the living wage.” Kogen revealed that the committee’s original goal was a \$12 median wage for all students, “but [this] is much better than the previous system.” “You should also know that the administration refused to give updates to our committee from March 13 until May 9. We were informed on April 12 the administration had established their own working group on student wages, which included

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Simple Servings gives new allergy-friendly options

By DINA MALTZER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

As students returned to campus for the 2023-2024 school year, they were greeted with a Wood Dining Commons (WDC) makeover that was hard to miss. Over the summer, the dining hall had been renovated to include a new Simple Servings station, dedicated to providing gluten-free and allergen-free food. Simple Servings is “an innovation developed at a corporate level by Sodexo and provides allergen and gluten-safe dining experiences for students at colleges and universities across the country,” according to John Pasquarello, General Manager of the WDC. He added that the new station would not have been possible

without support from across the campus community, including President Haring, Dean Williams and Executive Director Jane Schubert, as well as Muhlenberg College Capital Project Manager Rick Waligora, all of whom recognized the need for Simple Servings. Due to the rising number of students with specialized dietary needs and restrictions, the WDC had already taken several steps to create more inclusive dining options. These included the labeling of gluten-friendly foods, vegetarian and vegan options at every station, gluten friendly and vegan dessert options and a dedicated gluten-free pantry area. During the 2022-2023 school year, Magellan’s and Chef’s Table also began to offer more inclusive menus, with Chef’s Table offering an entirely vegetarian or vegan menu

on Mondays and Magellan’s becoming entirely gluten-friendly at lunch and dinner. Now, Simple Servings supplements these offerings by providing a menu that is gluten-free and free of eight of the top nine allergens– milk, eggs, wheat, soy, shellfish, peanuts, tree nuts and sesame. Simple Servings has taken the place of the WildfireGrill, which in turn has relocated to the previous location of Magellan’s. Simple Servings serves rotating entrees and sides at lunch and dinner times, as well as a salad bar. To ensure that the variety of the WDC is not lost with the new addition, Chef’s Table now serves breakfast every day while omelets are prepared at Mangia Mangia Pizza on weekends. Simple Servings utilizes a separate kitchen from the other WDC stations to ensure that all

meals served are free of the cross contamination that is nearly unavoidable in a shared kitchen. Additionally, Pasquarello shared other precautions that are being taken to ensure that food served at Simple Servings is safe for students with dietary restrictions: “Behind the scenes is where the program really shines. All staff members receive AllerTrain’s accredited food allergy training from a Sodexo Certified Master Trainer. Safety measures are taken from the loading dock to the serving station. Separate equipment, storage areas, utensils and preparation areas all minimize the risk of cross-contact.” For students with severe food restrictions, these additional protocols make a marked difference. As an example, foods that used to be only gluten-

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SPORTS

Women’s and men’s sports prepare for the fall season.
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THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY

Serving the Muhlenberg College Community since 1883

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CAMPUS SAFETY NOTES

8/23/23
Theft—Report of theft of speaker, mic, cables, and extension cord in Baker Center for the Arts, individuals identified and spoken to, items later returned.

8/24/23
Lost Property—Report of found purse in Seegers, owner notified to pick up item, purse placed in lost and found locker.

8/25/23
Injured Student—Report of injured student on Leh Street, MCEMS responded, student refused further treatment or transport.

8/26/23
Animal Complaint—Report of bat in President House, bat found and taken outside.

8/27/23
Liquor Law—Report of alcohol violation in the Village, MCEMS and Allentown EMS responded and transported individual to hospital.
Liquor Law—Report of alcohol violation in Walz Hall, Allentown EMS responded and transported individual to hospital.
Noise Complaint—Report of noise complaint of loud music at off campus location. Upon arrival resident spoken to and turned down music.

8/28/23
Bias Report—Report of gender identity harassment in Walz Hall, investigation to continue.

8/29/23
Injured Student—Report of sick student in Walz Hall, MCEMS responded, student refused further treatment or transport.

TRY OUR FRESH BAKED
GOODS at JAVA JOE!

Pair your morning cup of
coffee with a Scone, Biscotti,
Muhl Ear, or Croissant



SGA optimistic for a new semester

By DANIEL TORRES
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

As a new semester begins, members of the Student Government Association (SGA) are looking forward to hearing more student voices. “As each year has gone on,” Director of Communications Margery Leit ‘24 recalls, “I have seen this campus open up and display so much creativity and passion from students, and each year I get so excited to see what is going to be the new thing for our campus.”

SGA is aiming to increase transparency with the student body by encouraging communication with non-SGA members. One of SGA’s plans for this semester includes an edit to the bylaws to “allow non-member students to co-chair some of [SGA’s] ad hoc committees,” as described by Vice President Andrew Buckwalter ‘24. Support for affinity groups and the Office of Multicultural Life are expected to be increased over the next two semesters in order to ensure Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging practices to become general knowledge for all

campus community members.

More campus outreach campaigns are expected in the near future following the success of “A More Accessible Muhlenberg,” with SGA hoping to create conversations between students and faculty about improving accessibility on campus. SGA’s Instagram account, @bergstudentgov, is also planning to increase activity, with the goal to “spotlight different areas of campus,” described Leit. Along with an Instagram account, an SGA TikTok account is being planned, hoping to show off “more of a close-up and fun side [of SGA],” according to Leit.

There are also plans to increase support for student organizations. One of these changes includes switching to a new system that would allow club approvals twice a semester, a significant overhaul compared to the previous once-a-week practice. In exchange, the process to get a club approved is intended to be made “more organized and concise,” as described by Campus Engagement Chair Aidan Silvestri ‘25. “We hope that this will allow more time for proposals to come with specific intentions for their

proposed club and to garner more interest while their plans are developing,” President Jake Forestein ‘24 shared. Silvestri similarly shared that these changes would help student organizations by making sure “we are giving [club proposals] the time, energy and resources they deserve.” Currently, the dates for the general meetings to approve club proposals are Sept. 20 and Nov. 8.

There are also plans to change the current process to request funds to make it simpler. In order to help new student organization leaders, a weekly support group for club presidents is also currently being set up. This support network is intended to give both experienced and new student leaders a chance to talk with each other about the difficult task of running a student club, and exchange advice with one another. This support group is scheduled to launch at the end of the month. Other popular events, including the annual Udder Bar Challenge, are expected to make a return this year after fielding large turnouts the past two years.

Several SGA members are optimistic to be working with the community and each other.



PHOTO CREDITS TO THE MUHLENBERG STUDENT GOVERNMENT INSTAGRAM

(left to right) Andrew Buckwalter ‘24, Aidan Silvestri ‘25, Jake Forestein ‘24, Bethany Qian ‘25, and Evan Lipman ‘24 are a few of the newly inaugurated SGA executive board members.

“I’ve already felt how passionate everyone else is about their work and it inspires me to continue further with mine,” explained Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Chair Bethany Qian ‘25.

“Being a committee member and being able to hear more holistically about our community’s lived experience taught me so much about what it means to be a good community member and I feel so lucky that I get to continue facilitating positive and improved experiences in this leadership

role,” remarked Silvestri.

“The current group of SGA representatives are absolutely fantastic. They are all so passionate and excited, and it just fills me with hope for a great year ahead,” Forestein noted. “Everyone is bringing ideas to the table, regardless of class year, position or experience level, which is exactly what SGA need[...]. I’m really looking forward to seeing the growth of our individual representatives and to see what our greater community achieves in the year ahead.”

Chabad to become Muhlenberg affiliated organization

Students in Chabad lead despite financial setbacks

By SAMANTHA TEMPKIN
ASST. NEWS EDITOR

A new addition to Jewish life at Muhlenberg is fast approaching as students begin plans to establish a Chabad organization directly affiliated with the College. Students involved in Chabad are taking the lead in protecting an association that has not only provided them with a space to embrace their religious traditions, but also to foster a tight-knit community.

Muhlenberg students interested in Chabad previously relied on the services of an organization unaffiliated with the College known as Chabad Serving Muhlenberg. “Chabad focuses on being a warm home environment that generates intimate one-on-one connections with students. Learning sessions, helping students grow in their religious practice, helping students navigate their lives, providing meals for students and hosting services on major holidays, are all the charges of Chabad Serving Muhlenberg,” says Sam Nulman ‘24, one of the students working to establish a Chabad club affiliated with the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life on campus.

Led by the family of Rabbi Boruch and Rivka Greenberg, Chabad Serves Muhlenberg funded its programs solely from fundraisers and donations, leading to an unpredictable



PHOTO COURTESY OF SAMUEL B. NULMAN '24

Members of Chabad pose for a selfie.

budget that caused changing conditions for the organization. The main challenge Chabad students are facing is the loss of their meeting space. Nulman went on to explain how the group originally met in the home of the organization’s leaders, then most recently in a restaurant, and now “everything is up in the air again.”

Uncertainty began during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the Greenbergs could no longer hold meetings in their home. As a result, the family began holding outdoor events in their backyard, but were soon shut down once again when neighbors took notice and prohibited them from

hosting communal events in a residential-zoned area. Chabad Serving Muhlenberg then began holding meetings at the former Greenhouse & Enoteca Restaurant in November of 2022, when they took out a large loan in hopes of raising funds for their purposes. They revealed in an email sent out on Aug. 20, 2023 that they were unable to repay the loan due to an insufficient amount of funds raised and were required to sell the property. In the email, the family recounted their memories with Chabad Serving Muhlenberg, stating “At this time we are putting in every effort into finding new opportunities and optimal space

for Chabad at Muhlenberg.”

Another organization serving the Jewish population at Muhlenberg is Hillel at the Leffell Center for Jewish Life, which offers a range of various Jewish services that focus more on pluralism and thereby are inclusive of many Jewish beliefs. “Hillel has always been a place where all Jewish students can practice their Judaism as they please. We have previously offered two types of student-led services: a reform musical Shabbat service and a traditional egalitarian service,” stated Hillel President Eitan Gitlin ‘24. He continues, “In conversations with orthodox students, we

decided that we would have a traditional orthodox service running at Hillel for all students to come to. Our current plan is to hear from students and see what they are looking for to ensure that Hillel has what they are looking for and continues to be a place for all Jews.”

Nonetheless, having a space that they can call their own is very important to Chabad given that they are more of a tight-knit group that follows more stringent customs of Judaism. While Hillel International is designed to be an on-campus organization that serves the College’s entire Jewish population, Chabad focuses itself on a more niche group who desire specialized services. Chabad chapters will often situate themselves near college campuses so more observant students can have access to their services. Nulman says, “Chabad has always been known as a home where you can sit on a Friday night, have a bowl of warm soup, sing Jewish songs and connect with other students on campus. We are trying our best to get back to that vision.”

Hillel Engagement Intern, Ariana Handelman ‘25, began with Chabad during her freshman year, and the experience immediately set the tone for the Jewish community she would find at Muhlenberg. Although Chabad did not always

FROM **BUCKS** PAGE 1

no members of our Committee (and may not have included any students). On May 5, I spoke to President Harring in person but she refused to share any details and asked me to be patient. This effectively cut students off from one of the most crucial parts of the wages evaluation process, and may have played a role in keeping the new median student wage below our \$12 target,” says Kogen.

The SGA committee is currently led by Andrew Buckwalter ‘24 and Vishmitha D’Souza ‘26, and will stay intact to ensure all students are paid fairly and to address any concerns regarding the increased wages.

Nonetheless, Ryan and Mitton wanted to emphasize that “Campus student employment jobs have a lot to offer our students beyond just pay—including mentorship, professional development, opportunities to connect with the Muhlenberg community and flexible schedules.”

The SGA committee also recommended the idea of a tiered system to the College, which is now in place along with the \$9.25/hour baseline. This was created with the intention of paying students who work positions that require greater responsibilities and training fairly.

As explained by Ryan and Mitton, “The goal of the tiered system is to ensure transparency and equity in our process across campus and standardize our practice. All job descriptions are evaluated to determine the appropriate tier based on the required qualifications and job responsibilities. The majority of our jobs will be Tier 1 [\$9.25/hour]. These jobs are responsible for general tasks and provide essential support to various departments within the College. Tier 2 jobs [\$11/hour] will have additional responsibilities like supervisory roles or specialized qualifications and skills. Tier 3 positions [\$13/hour] will be reserved for those roles that require specific advanced

qualifications, training, certifications or significant relevant experience.”

For instance, an office position at the Career Center or Trexler Library pays \$9.25/hour, but a position such as a Writing Tutor is now being paid \$13 an hour due to the extensive training students undergo to become a tutor and maintain their position.

Ryan and Mitton added, “We also benchmarked our pay rates against more than two dozen comparable colleges, including those in the Lehigh Valley... Our new pay structure ensures that our base pay rate matches the highest in the Lehigh Valley and is above the median of our comparator schools”

This is true. Specifically within the Lehigh Valley area, Muhlenberg now pays its students the highest. “Lehigh University, Lafayette College, DeSales University and Moravian University have minimum wages ranging from \$8.25-9.25/hour, with students being paid up to \$12 for some positions,” said Wilson in her article.

While the tiered system is an improvement, there are still concerns with regards to classifying which positions receive a higher pay. Tour Guides and Peer Tutors are currently being paid 9.25/hour despite these positions requiring extensive training and expertise knowledge.

Despite the continued concerns, the increase in wages is still a welcome change. Joshua Barszczewski, director of the Writing Center, expressed how the low wages were affecting his ability to get students to take on tutoring assignments. “In some cases, writing tutors who were trained here would take their substantial skills and work for other colleges in the area or private companies. Others just declined assignments because they were making more money in retail or dog walking. There’s a certain extent to which I could appeal to students’ altruism since tutoring directly helps our community, and of course

the experience itself is valuable and rewarding, but altruism and good feelings don’t pay students’ bills. So, it became difficult to get highly qualified tutors excited about actually working on campus and I talked about it to anyone who would listen about how the low wages mitigated the culture of writing on campus.”

Writing Tutors actually planned to go on strike in the Fall of 2021 and again in the Spring of 2022 due to low wages. However, these strikes never materialized.

Upon learning about the increased wages, many students were ecstatic.

Jane Carney ‘24, who works as a Peer Tutor and now receives \$9.25/hour says, “I was pleasantly surprised [by] the wage increase. It came at a time I needed it most.”

Rebekah Arye ‘24, who works as a Writing Tutor and is paid \$13/hour says that “I think it’s good that wages are going up, and I like that the tiered system reflects the amount of expertise required for a job.”

However, regarding the tiered system, Arye added, “I personally would have aimed for 14/15 [dollars] for the top tier, but \$13 is more than I actually thought we’d get so I’m pretty happy with it. The minimum wage in my state is \$12, but I haven’t worked for less than \$16 outside of Muhlenberg since I was 17.”

Along with being a writing tutor, Arye works three other jobs on campus: Lead Tutor for the Writing Center, Biology department Clerk and Resident Assistant (RA). “I wouldn’t say that the wages are effective in supporting me financially, but they’re better than nothing. I’m lucky to have a lot of help from my parents towards tuition, but all of the other costs of living really do add up over time and I’ll be curious to see how the new wages compare against my expenses,” Arye says.

Jullian Chaparro ‘26 has a work-study position in the Alumni Affairs Office, \$9.25/hour, and says, “I’m a fan of the wage increase because it doesn’t



Faculty in Haas make changes to the student wages.

force me to work as many hours each week which I could be using to study, relax, work out, etc. I mean, it’s not a huge source of income but I think it can be really helpful if you put most if not all of your monthly pay into your savings.”

However, like many other Muhlenberg students, Chaparro has turned towards obtaining an off-campus job in addition to his work-study position. Chaparro’s off-campus job pays him \$15.50/hour. “I just find that at this stage of my life, I want to make more than what I normally get in my work-study because I [have to] start paying for my [car] insurance and other personal expenses. I’m nearly 19 and I don’t want to, and I also shouldn’t, consistently rely on [my parents].”

Many Muhlenberg students are financially independent, and while \$9.25 is better than \$8, it is unlikely that it would make a substantial difference in one’s ability to pay for tuition or personal expenses.

Alumni Des Suarez ‘23 had a work-study position in the Theater & Dance Department and two off campus jobs. One being Wawa, where she was paid \$15 an hour and the

other as a Server in a local restaurant. “That’s how I paid bills through school. And I tried to put whatever I made from my work-study into my savings if I could, but it really wasn’t that much. The eight dollars wasn’t enough.”

Daisy Cunningham ‘25, who works as a Writing Tutor and at the Lending Services Desk at Trexler Library, says, “I am fortunate enough that my family covers the cost of my weekly groceries/meal plan and such—if I was expected to cover these costs myself, the wages would not allow me to support myself financially.”

While the increased student wages are a step in the right direction, additional conversations and changes are inevitable as Muhlenberg and the country as a whole continue to grapple with the reality that a liveable wage remains elusive for many people.

FROM **DINING** PAGE 1

friendly (free of gluten containing ingredients) can now be labeled as truly gluten-free because they are free of cross contamination.

However, Simple Servings is not only for students with food allergies. “The ‘simple’ part comes from the minimally processed foods that are free from the most common allergens and gluten-containing ingredients. The program is favored not only by students with allergies or sensitivities, but also by those who are looking for simpler, cleaner meal options,” shared Pasquarello.

As for student reception of Simple Servings, the reviews have varied across the campus community:

A student who preferred to remain anonymous shared that “while the Simple Servings station has

accomplished its advertised purposes... there are still a few shortcomings in my opinion. Firstly, the station lacks variety. While managing that many restrictions is difficult, the meal is always meat and side vegetables.”

In contrast, Faith Miller ‘26 stated, “I assumed they were just gonna serve the same thing every day because when I think of allergen-free food, I think of plain white rice, but honestly I’ve been really impressed with the variation. The three times that I’ve gotten [Simple Servings], the protein has been really well done, which I feel like is the hardest thing to get right. So yeah, I’ve enjoyed eating at Simple Servings so far and I’m hoping that they continue having interesting food choices.”

Julia Stein ‘26, a gluten-free-student, added, “It’s

honestly refreshing to be able to get a meal without really worrying if I’m allergic to it.”

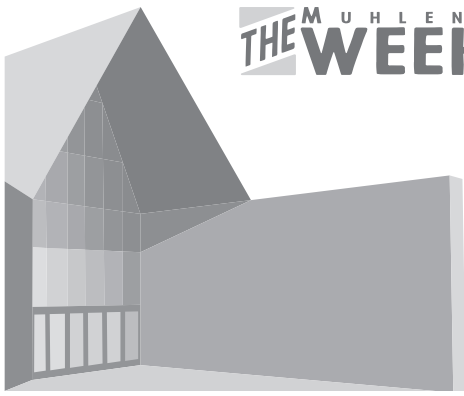
Simple Servings is providing a clean, safe option for students on campus, something that is becoming ever more important as students’ needs evolve.

FROM **CHABAD** PAGE 3

align with her individual beliefs, she expresses how integral of a resource Chabad was for her, “Chabad does provide a very welcoming space for a student who is new to college and creates that feeling of Shabbat. I’m very grateful for the community that they provided for me. It was nice to know that that was a stable place that I could always rely on, but not having that is hard and scary, and it’s hard being away from home for the Jewish holidays.”

Nulman and other students involved in Chabad are already taking action to continue

their traditions and preserve their community, including working with the Student Life and Religious & Spiritual Life Offices. Having already solidified a student-led Orthodox Sabbath service Friday night in The Leffell Center for Jewish Life, they plan to add a Saturday service as well as seeking approval to become an official club from the Student Government Association. Nulman says, “I hope that as Chabad brings its warm touch back to campus, and leads wonderfully effectual events, students, families and alumni will support its future by donating what they can to help Chabad keep making an impact on students’ lives.”



THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY

ARTS & CULTURE

“If you want to be outrageous, be outrageous with style.”

- Francoise Gilot

Reflecting on The Great Allentown Fair: *a nostalgic romp? Or a relic of a crueler past?*

By KATHERINE CONLON
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Every year around the first week of classes at Muhlenberg College, The Great Allentown Fair holds a 5-day festival filled to the brim with classic fair activities. The last time I had been to the fair was in preschool, so I decided to give it a visit to see if it was really as “great” as the name suggested.

The fair has a storied history, spanning over a century. “In its 171-year history, it has weathered pandemics and epidemics, world wars and the Great Depression. The fair has kept its agricultural roots while trying [to] walk a fine [line] by keeping what a traditional fair should look like while keeping up with the latest interests and trends,” said the fair’s marketing and entertainment manager Jessica Ciecwisz.

This year, the fair lasted from Aug. 30 to Sept. 4. The event boasted several major recording artists for its “Grandstand Shows” including Keith Urban, Yung Gravy, Nelly, Styx/REO



PHOTO BY KATHERINE CONLON '24

The Allentown Fair happened August 30 - Sept 4, including food and colorful rides.

Speedwagon and Tyler Hubbard. I did not attend these events but did overhear Nelly performing from a mile away, so the sound system must have been top-notch.

The fair is truly an amalgamation of the most random vendors. You can

purchase a hot tub, fireplace, beauty products or toys all within mere feet of each other. Massages were even available on-site for fair-goers. A group of acrobats were doing flips on trampolines next to a massive building filled to the brim with the winners of the many

contests held at the fair. Lining the shelves were plates of produce, baked goods and even pickled vegetables with ribbons indicating how they placed. Aside from the intimidating carnival rides that looked nauseating, the fair’s primary attractions were the food and the livestock show.

Underneath a large white tent were several farm animals on display including calves, rabbits and pigs. Some Muhlenberg students were alarmed to see the conditions that the animals were being subjected to. Rebekah Ayre '24 expressed this, saying, “I was not a fan of how the animals were tied up and confined. Some of them looked really skinny and uncomfortable, which made it hard to enjoy seeing them.” While the animals were adorable, seeing a calf that was less than a month old being confined to a wooden fence did not sit well with me, personally.

The food options were plentiful, with choices spanning many different cuisines. Classic fried fair food, gyros, barbeque and pizza were all up for grabs. I opted for a cone of mint chocolate chip ice cream which hit the spot but wasn’t anything to write home about. Catherine Debah '24 commented on her experience with the fair’s food offerings saying, “I think the food options at the fair were pretty great! I’ve been going

[SEE FAIR PAGE 6](#)

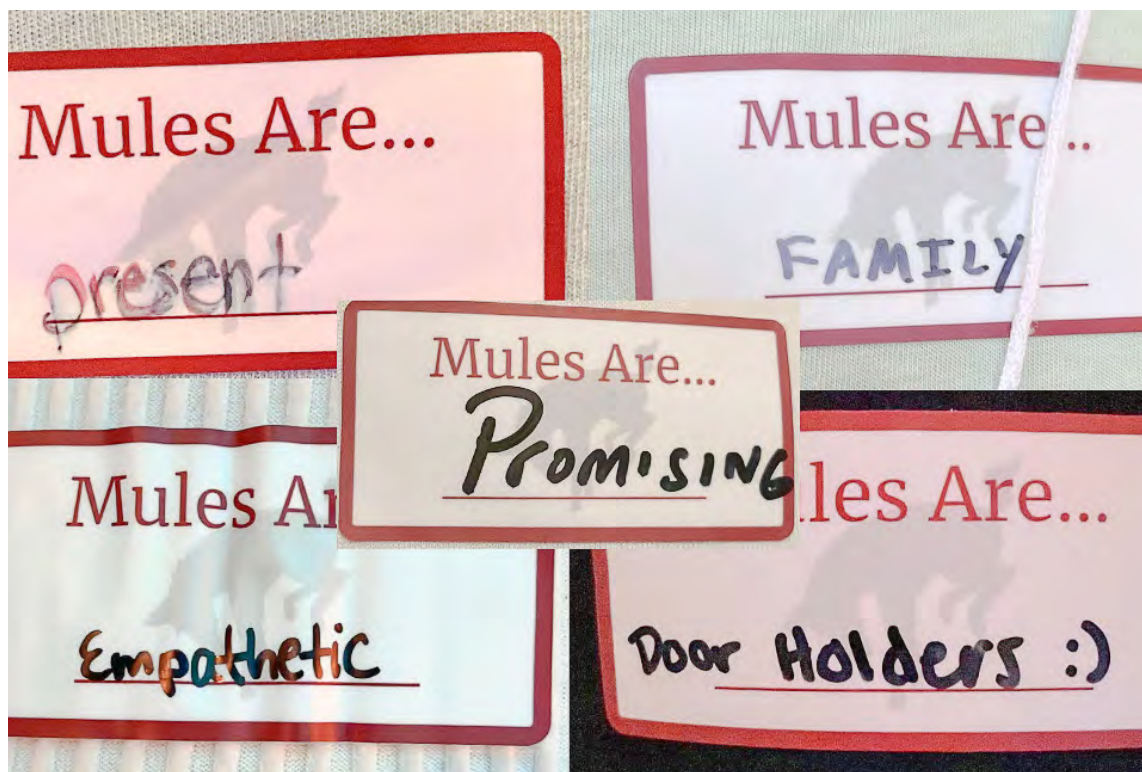
Mules are... connected

By SHINAM HUSSAIN
A&C EDITOR

Orientation Weekend is an established tradition at Muhlenberg, with four days filled with information, games and events, all in effort to help incoming students build community and connection as they embark on their college journey.

The third day of Orientation Weekend 2023, Aug. 26, was titled “Mules Are...” Day. This day consisted of events surrounding mental health education, information of Muhlenberg’s updated Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) policies and conversations on how to be an empathetic community member. The theme of the day was to teach incoming students that Mules are a versatile and supportive community, equipped with resources available to help students thrive.

The day kicked off with an interactive presentation for students. As all the students sat in Empie Theatre, questions



Class of 2027 comes up with creative responses to the prompt “Mules Are...”

were projected on a screen, and everyone was instructed to lift up their phone flashlights for the questions that resonated with them. The questions ranged from asking who in the crowd was feeling nervous or excited, to where people are from, to who

is planning on studying science or art. As the theatre lit up with each question, the goal of the presentation was clear in its effort to set the tone for the day: Muhlenberg is a community, and you are not alone here.

This presentation was followed

by conversations, discussions and events designed to teach the incoming students about the resources Muhlenberg offers for students. Tim Black, the director of student transitions and family programs, spoke on what this day meant to him, stating

“Each day of orientation has a theme or focus. Thursday is all about ‘welcome home.’ Friday is about academic success. Saturday is about what it means to be a Mule and a member of this community. While there was a focus on mental health and DEIB, that wasn’t the only focus of the day. If I had to boil it down to one word, it would be connection. Connection to each other, connection to resources and connections to campus. We wanted students to walk away knowing what is expected of them as a member of this community and where to turn if they need support. With the exciting launch of our DEIB statement in Jan. 2023, we knew we wanted all Mules to know what our commitment and expectations around DEIB are.”

“I was really proud of how the day turned out. We, as a college, expressed our expectations and the students not only listened but were engaged. Particularly in the ‘Mules are...Inclusive’ sessions, the conversation filled me with so much hope and

[SEE CONNECTED PAGE 6](#)

“Glut and Guzzle” sparks controversy

By ALMARAH URMAN
ASSISTANT LAYOUT EDITOR

When Muhlenberg students returned to campus and stepped foot inside the Center for the Arts Galleria (CA) for the first time this year, attention was immediately drawn to “Glut and Guzzle,” the CA’s latest art exhibition displayed openly in the Galleria outside of the Empie Theatre.

Made by American artist Ashe Kaye, “Glut and Guzzle” is a multidisciplinary art exhibit that explores the intersection of gender, sexuality and indulgence through the lens of Kaye’s

childhood in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The pieces are bright and bold, three-dimensional and highly suggestive. The description of the exhibit displayed alongside it calls it “simultaneously eye-catching and grotesque... [it] offers a multisensory, visceral experience.”

Being so different from previous exhibitions in the Galleria, the conversation of “Glut and Guzzle” spread quickly across campus, sparking conversations and controversy.

“It’s interesting, you know, I’m glad it’s there. It’s fun to have something in that space,

PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR, MADDIE CILIENTO ‘25

especially something that’s so out of the ordinary for what you’d expect to see in a college environment... I think if it’s going to be anywhere, I’m glad that it’s in that spot,” said Ian Graybill ‘26. The Galleria receives a lot of foot traffic every day and is one of the most prominent places for art to be exhibited on campus, which is part of the reason so many people have seen it. Comparatively, art displayed in the Martin Art Gallery is located behind doors and is out of sight to most students.

“I think that this is the first exhibit in this space that has actually started conversation, and this is the first exhibit where people are actually looking at the work and reading the text and the description about the author. It’s controversial but also this is the only time that anything in this space is getting recognition as much as it is,” remarked Olivia Fornasieri ‘24, in a similar vein to Graybill.

Certain pieces within the exhibition have sparked more conversation than others. Perhaps the most controversial has been the fabric sculpture depicting nipples placed in the corner of the Galleria. “The nipple pile is something else,” said Zoe Chasinoff, ‘26.

“In the best way possible, it’s gross. It’s not gross like ‘ew, I don’t want this here,’ it’s like it makes me want to look at it more, but it’s gross and weird. But I’m not saying these as negative terms.” Chasinoff continued.

“I think there’s value to be found in all art forms and in

PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR, MADDIE CILIENTO ‘25



Artist Ashe Kaye’s exhibit, “Glut and Guzzle”.

all media. Most people’s initial reaction is like ‘Oh wow! There’s a lot of body parts there!’ but I think everything is art and everything has a meaning after you think about it for a while... My friends have been like ‘oh ew, there’s nipples sitting on the floor over there’ but the human body is also a work of art. There’s been plenty of depictions, like Greek statues for example, have full frontal and back nudity too. I think it’s something worth considering, not being shut down,” reflected Steven Belloise ‘25.

“I think it was such a bold choice of them to put this here during freshman orientation. Bold, not in a bad or a good way,

but I’m just saying that that’s so Muhlenberg for them to throw the freshman in and say ‘here’s this exhibit, look at this. This is the first time you’re seeing this school, look at this exhibit,’” continued Fornasieri. During orientation, there were clusters of balloons lined up from the entrance of the CA to Empie, not allowing for the exhibit to be fully visible.

“Glut and Guzzle” will be displayed in the Galleria until Nov. 10 for anyone to form their own opinions. On Sep. 20, Kaye will visit Muhlenberg for the official artist talk and opening reception.



FROM **CONNECTED** PAGE 5

inspiration. I wanted students to walk away with an understanding of not only what is expected of them, but how to be an active, engaged participant in this community,” he continued.

“Mules are...” Day was known as something different in past Orientation Weekends. Instead of the presentations and discussions constructed for this day during Orientation Weekend 2023, in previous years, this day of Orientation presented the Sedehi Diversity Project (SDP). Leticia Robles-Moreno, Ph.D., an assistant professor of theatre and performance studies, who worked to create and execute SDP, provided more insight on the project and why the decision was made to not continue it for the past two years.

Robles-Moreno said, “It was a combination of how everything changed in the midst of COVID-19, exhaustion and burnout of student leaders and the realization that new generations of college students find different ways to approach DEIB issues. Last year, a group of SDP students - old and new - worked on the SDP Open Dialogues, a space for peer-to-peer conversations about what still needs to be done to keep making Muhlenberg a more welcoming community for everyone -- this is a new format can be led by new students at any time.”

“SDP transformed my life at Muhlenberg, helping me to better listen and understand what my students have to say. This was an initiative that came from students who wanted to [have]

open, honest and brave conversations during Orientation Week, and it was always by students for students. This is a model that all first-year students, and everyone, are welcome to think about: If you see something that is not working, or if you want to do something in a different manner, you can go ahead and propose and implement new ways of being together,” Robles-Moreno continued.

The work SDP was created to do, is still work that is actively done in the Muhlenberg community, as Robles-Moreno stated. SDP had a desire to teach and inform incoming students on not only DEIB policies of the College, but to provide students with a space for open conversation surrounding community, inclusion and connection. When asked about how “Mules are...” Day was created and how it would continue the goals of SDP, Black answered, “Sedehi Diversity Project made the decision to take time off last year during Orientation 2022. The decision was made by the students and faculty leading the project not to return this year as well. This year we decided to utilize the talent of our faculty and staff at Muhlenberg to try something new. Once we knew SDP was not returning, we brought together key players from the Provost Office, Office of Multicultural Life, Dean of Students Office and Housing and Residence Life to begin formulating the day.”

Black went further to explain the importance of “Mules are...” Day and it’s goal by stating, “Post-COVID, we felt the

need to reset community expectations and make sure that incoming students know how they should treat one another and that students acting in bias, discriminatory or other disrespectful ways is outside the social norms of our campus community. Framing this as ‘at Muhlenberg we treat others with respect, help one another and ask for support in troubling or harmful situations’ allows them to see that they are part of the community by doing those things and that if they choose not to do those things, they will be operating outside of our community expectations. There is a lot of important psychological research on the benefits of social norms versus approaching things from a more punitive perspective alone.”

Orientation leaders were meant to facilitate conversations and discussions among their groups of students, gauging their reactions and feelings surrounding the information they were given during this day. Orientation Leader Maya Brooks ‘24 expressed, “It’s hard to motivate a group of freshmen to be excited about a day of presentations but I didn’t receive much pushback from my students which I was grateful for. I liked the ‘Mules are...’ Day. I thought it was a necessary revamp of the program that was more catered to a realistic freshmen experience in a more digestible way.”

Rachel Anderson ‘25, a transfer student who was an Orientation leader for incoming transfer students, provided insight on her view of “Mules are...” Day

and how her students reacted to it saying, “They were really receptive. During and after the different sessions, my students were engaged in conversations about what they took away from the talks and how they could continue to apply the lessons during their time at Muhlenberg. Specifically after the DEIB session and during our restorative circle, they each reflected on the DEIB work Muhlenberg is doing, and how it differed from the other institutions they attended. They remarked that DEIB work like this is the reason they picked Muhlenberg, and how they appreciated Muhlenberg holding itself accountable to actually do the work it claims to value. I’ve never seen a group of students so engaged, especially during such a long day of people talking to them! They seemed to understand the responsibility of being a part of the Muhlenberg community, and were eager to begin joining organizations and commit to the work!”

Anderson went on to say, “It’s always the hope that students who come here appreciate and see the value in the day, as I think it’s really important. So many institutions make claims about the DEIB work they do behind the scenes or the prevention education they do, but few institutions really take the time to tell incoming students what exactly that work is, and to ask students to hold them accountable if they aren’t doing the work. So, seeing my students appreciate that and really reflect on it was inspiring.”

All about ‘Berg’s 11th annual alumni art show

The collection is currently displayed in the main hallway of Seegers Union.

By SHAIYAN FEISAL
ASSISTANT A&C EDITOR

Muhlenberg is currently displaying the 11th Annual Alumni Art Show. It will be showcased in the Seegers Union main corridor for the entire fall semester. Gallery Director Jessica Ambler discussed the creative process behind the Annual Alumni Art Show: “We put out an open call to all alumni to submit art for the 11th Annual Alumni Art Show back in the spring and I am immensely grateful to all of the talented alumni who contributed to the show. It hasn’t been held in person in a few years due to COVID, I believe it was held online instead, so this was an exciting opportunity to start showing the work on campus again. In past years, the art was shown in Baker [Center for the Arts (CA)] for a week or two around alumni weekend, however, this year we thought it might be nice to keep the work up for the entirety of [the] fall semester and to show it in Seegers, which is highly trafficked by everyone on campus. I was overwhelmed by the volume and quality of the work submitted, so the challenge wasn’t so much what work to choose but rather how to show all of it so that each work could

be highlighted. The exhibition layout was designed by my Lead Gallery Assistant, Lizard Foley ‘24 [who is an] art major and who did an amazing job at organizing the art in a balanced arrangement that flows visually, allowing viewers to appreciate each artist’s work.”

Participating artists in the Alumni Art Show are exhibiting work in palladium/platinum print on Arches Platine, digital photographs, hand-cut paper, acrylic paint on board, trash with India ink, needlepoint, watercolor, linocut printing and fused glass. This year’s participants are James Cunningham Ph.D. ‘63, Fred Albright ‘66, Karen (Kangas) Repka ‘70, Jill (Long) Trestle ‘72, Kerilyn Burrows ‘72, Lyle Allan ‘73, Audrey Tiernan ‘77, Mark Schwartz ‘79, Susan Feely Gettlin ‘82, Leslie (Arndt) Valiere ‘86, Monica Sztzybel ‘89, Hannah Cascio ‘15 and Chloe Buergenthal ‘21.

Palladium/platinum printing is a traditional photographic printmaking technique. This is when the prints are exposed by UV light. This technique allows for them to convey detail within shadows along with giving it a crisp appearance. Palladium/platinum printing is a long process, but the results are worth all of the hard work put in.

Hand-cut paper, also known as paper-cutting, is an art form where the artist cuts outlines or portraits out of paper. Paper cutting originated from numerous cultural backgrounds including Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian, Filipino, Jewish, Mexican, Slavic, Swedish and Swiss.

Using discarded items as art



The 11th Annual Alumni Art Show lines the hallways of Seegers Union.

is known as recycled art. Waste, such as paper, can be transformed into creative pieces. In Cascio’s piece, paper trash was used as the background and India ink was used in the foreground. India ink is made out of lampblack (soot created by burning oil or organic materials) combined with water, which creates a liquid.

Needlepoint is a hand embroidery technique that either covers a fabric or canvas. It is different from tapestry which uses diagonal and small stitches. Needlepoint has a wide variety of stitches and various threads or yarns can be used.

In linocut printing, an image is cut out or gouged from a sheet of linoleum, which is easier to carve into in comparison to wood. Then, the uncut areas are either inked or printed on.

Printing can either happen by rubbing manually with a spoon or by a printing press.

Fused glass is when a piece of glass is formed after heating two or more pieces of glass together in a kiln. Some examples of the items used for fused glass are jewelry, wall hangings, plates and tiles. Burrows’ fused glass piece is a puffin sitting on a surface.

The student body has been appreciative of the art show. Megan Block ‘26 stated, “I really enjoy walking down the hallway in Seegers Union and seeing the amazing art pieces. I don’t think Muhlenberg has done this before, or at least while I’ve been here.”

Fuka Aizawa ‘26 said, “I really like the Alumni Art Show, especially Schwartz’s digital

photograph of Sag Harbor Fog, it’s very real.” Colette Cragin ‘25 “love[s] the art show. I think it’s really important to highlight different Alumni’s hard work, and they need to keep showing it here in Seegers Union instead of the CA so that everyone can see it and not just art students. I think that they should have this year round.”

When asked about the Alumni Art Show, Chenjing Liaw ‘25 said, “What happened to abstract art? There used to be abstract art along the corridor in Seegers Union in the past, but it disappeared! I do like the art show though, it’s nice to see artwork along the hallway rather than just a plain wall.”

PHOTO BY JOHNNY VEGLIA ‘24



Placed next to a Greenwood Cemetery, there were a great number of livestock at the fair.

PHOTO BY ALAMARAH URMAN ‘26



Alamarah Urman ‘26 pets a cow.

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there for about three years now so I have a few regular spots I go to but I like to try out a few new ones every year. This year I tried out Kou’s Kitchen for the first time, they served West African cuisine and they were family owned. I stayed and talked with them a bit and they were super nice!”

Shobha Pai ‘24 shared how the fair allows her to feel more involved in the Allentown community, “The Allentown Fair always seems magical. I feel like living in the ‘Muhlenbubble’ forces me away from Allentown but events like the fair really show me the amazing diversity that the city has to offer. My favorite thing was the pig race I saw.” Shobha Pai ‘24

Overall, the fair provided the Muhlenberg student body with a distraction before classes kicked into full force. Despite its entertaining displays and attractions, the fair presents ethical dilemmas to those who take issue with putting animals on view for the purpose of amusement. One can hope that the Great Allentown Fair can maintain its commitment to its “agricultural roots” while sacrificing the livestock show or at least making the conditions more hospitable for the creatures inhabiting this exhibition.

Traveling in Early Adulthood

By MEGAN HANSEN
OP-ED EDITOR

When you live on a strip of land surrounded by water, it can be easy to feel disconnected from the rest of the world. I mean... I’m from Long Island so maybe I’m being dramatic for the sake of romanticizing my first big trip, but there is something to be said about taking those first baby steps outside of the comfortable boundaries that you have established.

I had to burst my “Muhlenbubble” for a second and just leave the familiar culture of the East Coast of America that I have been living in for two decades. Little did I know when I booked my ticket, I would be leaping into a new feeling of independence, self security and adulthood that was rare to come by.

This summer I had the privilege of traveling to Scotland, the birthplace of my grandmother, the inspiration for the hideous yet valiantly vibrant tattoo that I’ve looked at on my father’s arm for 19 years and the origin of my family’s first dog, Angus.

Although the familial ties to this foreign entity that I spontaneously decided to fly to are tightly knotted, I traveled without my family this summer. I traveled without my significant other, and without any of my best friends either.

As anxiety-inducing as the weeks leading up to the trip were, it was the best decision I have ever made. If you have the ability to travel by yourself in the early stages of adulthood, I could not express stronger encouragement for you to do so.

It’s a nerve-wracking journey to take. I mean first of all, I barely had any money to my name. I spent the summer ringing up

meatballs at an Italian market in the neighborhood over, and picking up babysitting gigs whenever I could. Even at that, I was nervous that I was saving up all this money just to have my plane crash, or something else that was never going to actually happen.

Every time I remembered the bag that I had dropped to go on this trip, I felt a tightness in my chest. I am a college student after all. Plus, it was already a taboo concept to me that I couldn’t just drive my little 2006 Hyundai to where I was going. I was entering a vessel that I had absolutely no control over, potentially filled with screaming babies and body odor wafting over from the person in front of me.

My anxieties about the trip were merely projections of the fact that I was officially here without any “adult supervision” or someone to hold my hand. I had to somehow navigate this foreign country without any set itinerary or guidelines. But the spontaneity is what made the trip. Jumping on a train, which took me to a bus stop, which drove me to a ferry, which took me to an island on a random weekday became our schtick that week. I never knew what the next day had in store and that sort of excitement and mystery made me feel alive.

Especially as a first-year, it can be so easy to fall into a routine at college. It gives you that same feeling of comfort and familiarity you once had. But eventually, you remember that even though you are at this awkward middle ground between kid and adult, you’re still young.

Despite the amazing time I had last semester, I finished off my freshman year wondering if



Photo by Megan Hansen '26

I spent too much time worrying about my responsibilities out of pure apprehension. Being on this trip taught me how to revel in my youth. It taught me how to be responsible and careful with myself while also letting myself experience what the world had to offer outside of my dorm room desk because there was a lot more than I ever could have imagined.

I wasn’t completely alone, thank goodness. I traveled with some family friends that I hadn’t really seen since I was in middle school but was absolutely delighted to get reacquainted with on this trip. However, I wasn’t with my regulars. I didn’t want to leave at first, especially considering that my trip ended just days before I moved back here. Plus, generally when you’re experiencing something wonderful for the first time, your first thought is to share it with the ones you love. But the self discovery that comes with solitude is more necessary than someone who has as much FOMO as I do could possibly understand.

I could cite many instances where I felt a newfound sense of pride in myself during my ten days in Scotland– for finally doing something I’ve always wanted to, for stepping out of my comfort zone, for seeing the places where my family grew up and for using my youth to my advantage and widening the scope of my existence in this world.

But there is one specific instance that resonated with me the most: I was on the island of Kerrera, mountain biking for the first time. I had worked hard on the way up– sweating, heaving, regretting my decisions– the usual behavior from asthmatics on the top of a mountain.

I looked at the downward path ahead of me and gulped. It was steep and impossible to see the whole path ahead. I mounted my bike and kept my feet firmly on the ground for several minutes, contemplating. But before I could even take a breath, I felt my body instinctively start to take off. I think it was because I knew I had already overcome my fear of loneliness, discomfort, and lack of control. At this point in the trip, I was feeling invincible. I flew down the side of the mountain, practically parallel to it. I nearly shit my pants.

At first I was screaming, but as I progressed down the path, it turned into laughter and “Woo-hoo”’s. Yes, I was crying like a little kid. But simultaneously I was seeing lush green hills roll over the clearest water I’ve ever seen. I have truly never seen a more beautiful landscape in my entire life.

I was traveling at about eighty miles per hour. It was the most thrilling thing I’ve ever done. It was the most beautiful thing I’ve ever seen- the way the colors combined to create a dynamic scene blurring past my eyes. And

it was the loneliest I’ve ever felt.

My first thought was, “Wow I wish my partner could see what I’m looking at right now.” To be honest though, I really don’t (no offense, love you).

That moment was mine. Uniquely mine. No one else saw what I saw, or felt what I felt and I could describe it all I want but none of the people reading this will ever know either. The memory can never be tainted by the impermanence of human relationships.

You never know what the world has in store for you. As sad as this is, and as much as I sincerely hope this never happens, my friends right now may not be my friends in twenty years from now. People grow in all different directions and for the first time in my life, I am not afraid of that concept, or of being alone. I am such a cool person– I literally just went mountain biking in a foreign country! That’s nuts!

So as I sit back here in my Pennsylvania dorm room, all I have to take away from this is that you should save up that tutoring money, and travel. I have learned more about myself, and what the world has to offer than I ever thought I would. The trip played a big part in defining who I want to be as I grow into my adult self.

Sad Girl Book Club

By KATHRINE CONLON
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Welcome to the first edition of The Muhlenberg Weekly’s new and much requested Sad Girl Book Club series. I, Katherine Conlon, am not only the editor-in-chief of the paper but I’m also probably like the President of sad girls nationwide (and some parts of Canada). Okay, enough with the cringey introduction. In short, my name is Katie and I like to read. In particular, I love books with tortured female protagonists. So, in my “book club” (feel free to actually read my recs if you’re interested), I’m going to discuss books that fit in this niche sub-genre of literature and whether or not I would suggest reading them.

The Bell Jar by Sylvia Plath

This summer I indulged in a classic, breezy read: Sylvia Plath’s “The Bell Jar.” Plath’s only novel follows protagonist Esther Greenwood as she struggles to adjust to life in her hometown after a month living in New York City for a writing internship. Esther, like so many college-aged women, visualizes the endless options that her future could go in while feeling suffocated by the limitations that inherently lie in 1950’s early womanhood. Esther rejects traditional notions of domesticity. Reflecting on marriage, she says, “That’s one of the reasons I never wanted to get married. The last thing I wanted was infinite

security and to be the place an arrow shoots off from. I wanted change and excitement and to shoot off in all directions myself, like the colored arrows from a Fourth of July rocket.”

If Plath’s exemplary ability to command the nuances of the English language isn’t enough of a reason for you to want to read this book, then at least do it because all the BookTok influencers are obsessed with it. Yes, you heard that right, “The Bell Jar” is trendy. Plath’s wistful, yet strong tone has struck a chord with the modern girl living at the height of the Internet age. Her descriptions about feeling repressed by a metaphorical bell jar that traps

her protagonist within curved glass walls continues to resonate with readers who also feel trapped by expectations. The term “bell jar” is particularly poignant when you realize that Plath could have described Esther’s mental prison with something like a wooden box or metal sphere. In the bell jar, though, Esther can still observe the surrounding world; noticing all the things she cannot participate in, the people she cannot connect with and places she cannot go. Her potential paths in life lay directly in front of her, but they are tauntingly blocked by the thin glass, conveying Plath’s twisted sense of irony.

Without going too deeply into the details of the story, I can say with confidence that “The Bell Jar” is perfect for anyone who has experienced overwhelming internal struggle about their life, career or general philosophical principles.

However, if you are sensitive to topics of suicide and sexual assault, then I would suggest reading at your own discretion.

By KEANNA PEÑA
MANAGING EDITOR

Written in Italy

1. There’s something about New York that requires mastering. Mastering the way you walk, mastering the subway, mastering the shortcuts and the roundabouts to avoid the homeless man down the block. After a while, it’s easy, it’s second nature to me now and everywhere I go, I think, “I need to master this.” I need to know where all the bathrooms are, I need to be the one leading the way, I need to be the one carrying the cash, the bus passes, the pepper spray.

Now whenever I go somewhere new, I think and decide which borough it is and act accordingly. For example, Allentown is Queens, New Jersey is Staten Island and Merano, Italy is Manhattan. And I love Manhattan. Manhattan brings out a kind of hyper independence in me and even though I’m from Brooklyn, the first place I have ever mastered was Manhattan.

And so when I went to Merano for the first time, all I saw was this beautiful, smaller, brighter, safer Manhattan and I was excited. So excited that I started to imagine what my life would look like if I lived in Merano.

I’d visit the farmers market

every Friday and walk through its endless maze of clothes, leather belts and assorted spec, and buy shirts my dad would wear. I’d become family with the sweet couple who engraved my mothers name on a leather key-chain. I’d speak so much Spanish it would eventually fuse into Italian. I’d probably never go to a Costco or BJ’s ever again.

I’d see movies at the local theater and forget what AMC’s greasy popcorn tasted like. My feet would get used to walking on cobblestone. I’d take the bus all the time instead of the subway, where I would steel every muscle in my body until that train arrived, which too was its own kind of mastering. I’d forget what a New York bagel tasted like.

I’d grow to like red wine with every meal. I’d grow accustomed to Merano’s arched doorways and pretty salmon pink roofs, and their strange, middle of the day closing times. I’d grow to know the names of the euros I carry in my wallet.

And then, maybe after all that growing, I’d stop comparing everything to New York. Manhattan would just be Manhattan and Merano and just be Merano. But that’s stupid. I was stupid.

2. Let me tell you about Brooklyn. In my brain it’s split into two. First there’s the gentrified areas, where there’s bike lanes, a Starbucks on every corner, brownstones in neat rows, and gyms with \$100 a month memberships.

And then there’s everywhere else, and everybody else too.

In these areas there are delis where you can still get a bacon egg and cheese for 3.75. In these areas, you can hear the smack and clack dominos and beer bottles from your seventh floor apartment. In these areas, the fire hydrants will flood the sewers in the summer. In these areas, the screech of the train is music, the trash on the floor is decoration, and the cat calls from the men around the corner are a symphony.

3. I have not mastered Brooklyn because I have not been to all of Brooklyn. And I have not been to all of Brooklyn because I am afraid. Sometimes I am afraid of even my own neighborhood.

4. When I went to Merano the second time, I quickly began to realize that Merano wasn’t Manhattan. This beautiful, idyllic place that I built in my head began to burn when I felt the

eyes, and then the laughter of a woman a few feet away from me in a clothing store. Her eyes were going from my face to my hair, and then her hands were going to her husband so that she could show him what was so funny. I watched her watch me and I burned.

And then in the next store, as I popped in and out of my dressing room to show my friends a dress, again, the eyes, the looks. And I remember going back into my dressing room, and looking at my face and my big curls in the mirror.

For one terrible moment I thought, maybe I should put my hair up.

5. In this way, Merano wasn’t Manhattan but Brooklyn, the parts of Brooklyn where, even in the summer, I carry an extra large sweater to hide my chest and legs. But even then, somehow, what I felt that day in Merano was worse. After I left the store and walked down the street, I felt terrified of people just looking at me. At least when it’s just men, I know it’s lustful, and I can control that. I can put on the big sweater, I can wear the big clothes, and I can put on a bitch face.

But these people from Merano are looking because of my

hair and my skin and my culture.

And when I suddenly felt like crawling, quickly, outside of my body, I knew that Merano wasn’t Manhattan and it wasn’t Brooklyn. I also knew that I couldn’t master Merano because really, I didn’t want to anymore. Because in mastering there’s also sacrifice.

In New York, I sacrifice the clothes I want to wear, the places I want to go, hell, I even sacrifice nighttime.

And so as I walked out of that store with my scrunchie still on my wrist and my hair in my face, I knew that I wouldn’t trade the sacrifices I make in New York for the ones I knew I would eventually make here in Merano.

6. I am, in New York.

Keanna Peña ‘25, posing in front of the greenlands in Italy.

Tiny horoscopes for a tiny campus

MICRO-ASTROLOGY

Weekly advice and predictions

Aquarius (January 20 – February 18)

You’re just in a silly goofy mood this week. Unfortunately for you, silly goofy ends with you running half-naked down the center of Chew Street. At least it’s warm out.

Pisces (February 19 – March 20)

You’re suspicious that someone stole your favorite pen. You’re right, they did. Or maybe they didn’t. Better cut them out of your life completely just in case.

Aries (March 21 – April 19)

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES should you get the french toast sticks in GQ. Trust me.

Taurus (April 20 – May 20)

Sometimes people not hearing you is a good thing. Think of it like an extra life in a video game—now you get a chance to not do the stupid thing.

Gemini (May 21 – June 20)

You can’t call it your delulu era if you’ve just always been delulu.

Cancer (June 21 – July 22)

This week you remember that shrimp get to see a whole other spectrum of colors that you never will and it sends you into a spiral. It’s sad, I know, but you do still need to eat meals and do your homework.

Leo (July 23 – August 22)

Your overall vibe this week is giving kid-who-got-gum-stuck-

in-their-hair-and-cut-it-out-themselves. Slap some peanut butter on it and do better next week.

Virgo (August 23 – September 22)

Be careful of moving in extremes, you’re prone to ripping your pants.

Libra (September 23 – October 22)

Girl, no.

Scorpio (October 23 – November 21)

The same quality that makes you sexy and mysterious is what makes bees so attracted to you. Try and suppress that animal magnetism.

Sagittarius (November 22 – December 21)

This week you have the urge to do work in the basement of Moyer—don’t. You’ll catch some kind of spore if you’re down there too long.

Capricorn (December 22 – January 19)

Avoiding spending any time in the library doesn’t make you cool, it just makes you a bibliothecaphobe. You’d know what that meant if you went to the library more.



Creative Writing Prompts

Email to bergweeklyoped@gmail.com email for the chance to be featured next week

1. Tell us your opinions about Muhlenberg’s biggest selling point versus what you would change if you were a part of the administration team.

2. What is your biggest obstacle here at Muhlenberg? Why is it an obstacle? What would you like to see done about it?

Falling into place

Muhlenberg’s men’s sports teams discuss their preparedness for the upcoming fall seasons

By EVAN SCHLOTTERBECK
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Class is back in session, dorm rooms are filled with decorations, and the dining hall is in full force once again. The buzz from the athletic fields, courts and courses as the Mules kick it into high gear can also be felt surging throughout campus in a much anticipated year for Muhlenberg athletics.

The Muhlenberg men’s soccer, cross country and football teams arrived on campus as early as Aug. 8 as part of a designated preseason period by the NCAA, while the men’s tennis and golf teams began practicing around Labor Day. Although these dates are the opening of official, organized preparation days, all of these teams’ journeys started as soon as their previous season ended.

The men’s soccer team finished their season in the second round of the NCAA tournament after receiving an automatic bid from their 2022 Centennial Conference championship win over Johns Hopkins, the program’s first since 2014. Four seniors from last year have also decided to return for a ninth semester to defend their title alongside returning players on the resurfaced and redesigned Varsity Field. “Considering that the majority of the team from last season is back, we have a very good understanding of how each other play and mesh well on the field,” said junior captain Kevin Adams ’25. “The new pieces who have immersed themselves in the group are starting to fit in with the team nicely and add a lot of quality on the field.”

Any championship is something to be proud of, a collective, successful effort towards a tangible goal, but the squad is eager to continue developing. “The team is looking to start much faster than we

did last year,” commented Adams. “We had a great finish to the year, but early on we lost a couple of tough games outside of conference play that set us back on our road to success. Starting with a couple of wins and positive results is the main thing we are looking to improve on this year.”

Men’s soccer returns to Baltimore to battle Johns Hopkins in their Centennial Conference opener on Sept. 16.

In the adjacent Scotty Wood Stadium, the Muhlenberg football team aims to bounce back from a 7-4 season containing closely contested bouts, with conference rivals getting the slight edge over the Mules. Having experienced the wrong side of the outcome last year, ‘Berg Football is ready to give every last ounce in 2023. “[Last season] showed us as a group that we must earn every opportunity we have and play every down to the final whistle,” stated captain offensive tackle Zach Greenberg ’24. “We have emphasized earning our victories every week along with playing all 60 minutes of each game, ensuring we leave it all on the field. We have good depth and are overflowing with great players who will be able to make an impact the minute they touch the field.”

Another building block for this team coming off last season is a commitment to specific values and philosophies regarding on-field competition and building strong, interpersonal connections between players. “What sets us apart from our opponents is our philosophy in practice,” added Greenberg. “We go first string versus first string every practice with the thinking being you must go against the best to become the best. To

be a successful team, you must go to war with your family for 60 minutes. Entering week one, our team chemistry is the highest it’s been for a long time, with each of us fueling off one another’s success.”

The football team will look to ride the momentum of their 53-12 win over Moravian when they challenge Salisbury on Sept. 9.

Turning towards the track and surrounding West End streets, the men’s cross-country runners have been hitting the pavement and putting in the miles with race victories swirling through their minds. Spending time on runs and during strength workouts has been a highlight of their preseason experience, and the paces have been increasing since they arrived on campus, but this group is now taking their preparation to new heights. “During preseason week, the team met with a nutritionist to stress the importance of staying healthy throughout the season,” explained Mason Tran ’25. “Along with that, the team has been focusing on listening to our bodies and making sure we address injuries as soon as we feel something.”

Physical and mental health have been a focal point for these Mules during their practices this summer, aiming to be in peak running form as the fall foliage emerges. The Mules will race next on Sept. 15 at the Haverford Invitational.

On the courts behind the Leffell Center for Jewish Student Life, the men’s tennis team is laying the groundwork for a uniquely competitive and enriching experience. This edition of the squad has knowledge that travels far beyond the court, ideally translating into exclusive advantages. “The culture is becoming

much more of an international team,” said Josh Benson ’24. “With recruits from outside North America, there’s a lot of learning about the way of life outside the US. We have a good unit with lots of talent and I’m very excited to see how much we can grow.”

Last but certainly not least, ‘Berg men’s golf has been working on their short games at the driving range and getting practice rounds in at Lehigh Country Club for their upcoming tournaments this fall. All sports involve a heavy dose of mental fortitude, but golf’s slower speed of play and extensive time to study shots with precision increase tension to the nth degree. “As a team, some of our goals this season are to lower the team average and play smart while making good decisions on the course,” said Captain Aron Gianchandani ’24. “We also need to focus on the next shot, keeping our composure, and not letting our emotions take over.”

The team is looking to apply these strategies when they open their season on Sept. 18 at the Fairleigh Dickinson Invitational. This event is circled on their calendar as many golfers know the course well and look to use that to their advantage.

As things continue ramping up for these teams and athletes, consider attending an event to cheer on the Mules. Energy and noise from the sidelines go a long way toward intensity, emotion, and victory for all Muhlenberg athletic teams.



A REVIEW OF MUHLENBERG’S MEN’S SPORTS. PHOTO CREDIT TO THE MUHLENBERG SPORTS TEAM’S INSTAGRAMS.

Preseason poll: Muhlenberg women's fall sports

‘Berg women’s teams are ready to compete for silverware after intense pre-season training

By Lexi Sipos
Assistant Sports Editor

While many students are preparing for the start of classes, several fall student-athletes arrived on campus days, even weeks, earlier to participate in their preseasons. Muhlenberg’s fall women’s sports teams are entering their seasons with a positive mindset and a successful end to their preseason workouts. With cross country, field hockey, soccer, volleyball, and golf, our women’s teams lean on the Muhlenberg athletic staff and each other to be prepared for their fall competition.

Women’s volleyball came to campus with five new first-years looking forward to what the upcoming season holds. The team’s captain, Julia Ficon ‘24, offered her input, “I was really happy and impressed with our play from preseason.” Preseason sets the tone for the team, and volleyball came prepared for the next battle of the season. Finally, Julia commented on how the team’s goals confidently align with their coach, Rob Vicker. “One of our goals is to make another playoff run within the conference. In addition, our coach said that he wants to host a playoff game. The team certainly agrees with that goal because hosting a playoff game means that you are a part of the top teams in the conference going into playoff matches.” Women’s volleyball is continuing to push themselves past preseason into their fall conference games.

Since our women’s golf team does not have a formal preseason, they work individually over the summer and come to-

gether optimistically for their fall opener. Kaylin Foss ‘25 noticed the immediate team connection when back on campus, despite the team’s individual practices. “Carly [Foss’ teammate] and I both dedicated ourselves to playing at our home courses. I am lucky enough to be a member of the Bucknell Country Club where I utilized the driving range and played 18 regularly. I worked on my swing and short game as well,” said Foss. All of the girls are composed and excited to be back on campus working together. However, due to the loss of many seniors because of graduation, they are in search of more members to join the golf team. If you are interested, please reach out to their head coach, Billy Hallman.

Women’s soccer is entering its preseason with new turf, a new coach, and a new outlook. They are eager to get on their new pitch after their recent trip to England, and in conversation with Lucy Atwood ‘24, she comments on their preseason schedule. “Everyone showed up to preseason ready to go and with a great attitude. Our coach, Kathy Prescott, did an amazing job from planning out every small detail to creating a new environment for us to rebuild and thrive in. We had loads of success during preseason, and I hope to carry that success into the rest of our season.” The girls won both of their preseason scrimmages, and they look forward to pushing themselves this season; finding success on and off the

field. Mainly, they look forward to seeing their 14-person senior class finish their last year on a high note and propel the team ahead for years to come.

The positivity within the women’s sports preseason doesn’t stop there. Field hockey has been working tirelessly in their preseason to set themselves up for an exciting season. Captain Paige Goldberg ‘24 spoke about their preseason work, “Preseason really helped us get into shape and work out the kinks. We are able to grow and develop as a unit from where we left off in the fall.” Field hockey preseason has built on their momentum from last season. From their first day in preseason, their competitive nature was tangible, with fitness testing and playing in the heat. Nonetheless, they are also focusing on furthering their technical abilities. Goldberg states, “We spent a lot of time working on taking quicker shots and using the width of the field. We dedicated a lot of time in the weight room and saw great improvement in our strength.” The girls have set out their goals and are ready to achieve them this preseason. They are working in tandem with their strength and conditioning coach, head and assistant coaches, each other, and time on the field to produce the best outcome possible.

Finally, women’s cross country is building off their record last season to influence the current season’s outcome. Lauren Afran ‘25 explained their presea-

son efforts, “We had a really fun preseason and it was a great way for us all to get used to running hard workouts and doing all of the extra little things that matter like stretching, working on mobility and strength training.” On the track, they are focused, organized and prepared for the next sprint. While they are building their physical abilities, they also are building their team comradery. Afran commented, “Preseason was a great opportunity for us to all get to know the freshman and to do fun team bonding activities to connect as a team outside of running.”

Ultimately, every women’s team has built a foundation during their preseasons that will enable them to flourish during their regular season competition. Across every sport, coaches have encouraged and pushed their teams to be their absolute best. That motivation doesn’t stop there, as every team is composed of driven, hard-working athletes who excel both on and off the field. Most of all, preseason allows the Mules to get one step closer to what they want to achieve this fall season. Look out for what the Muhlenberg women’s fall sports have to offer this 2023 season.

A REVIEW OF MUHLENBERG’S WOMEN’S SPORTS. PHOTO CREDIT TO THE MUHLENBERG SPORTS TEAM’S INSTAGRAMS.



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THE MUHLENBERG

THE WEEKLY / SPORTS

Trip of a lifetime

The Muhlenberg women's soccer team reflects on their trip abroad

BY OLIVIA OBERMAN
SPORTS EDITOR

Hearing the roaring echoes in Wembley Stadium, walking the music-filled streets of Liverpool, exploring Windsor Castle, and sharing Percy Pigs candy on each bus ride were just a few memories that the Muhlenberg women's soccer team will share forever.

On Aug. 5, head coach, Kathy Prescott, led the Mules on a week-long excursion to England. The team visited London, Manchester, and Liverpool in aims to explore the cultures, sightsee and of course– play some soccer! Each destination, bus ride, practice and team dinner had its own unique charm. The team was equally grateful to have Athletic Trainer, Chelsea Bortz, travel with them ensuring great health along the way.

Immediately upon arrival, the team battled their jetlag to see Wembley Stadium in the flesh and experience the magical atmosphere of a premier league football match between Manchester City and Arsenal F.C. If that first experience had not made it clear enough, the team's second attendance to watch Crystal Palace play at Sheffield Stadium later in the week, and touring both Anfield and Tottenham Stadiums, revealed the importance of football to England's culture.

Anna May '26 stated, "To experience football in England is to immerse yourself in a culture where football is not just a game but a way of life. While in London, we had the privilege to watch two professional matches between premier league teams. The passion the fans have is unmatched. Their entire day shifts based on the score of the game."

The team saw a new perspective of the sport that their lives had revolved around for so many years and, in return, gained a greater appreciation for it. Grace Hoffman '25 explains, "The huge football culture in England emphasized our love for the game even more. Seeing great soccer definitely translates to playing great soccer. While exploring the beautiful parts of London, Manchester and Liverpool, the team became closer than ever



THE MUHLENBERG WOMEN'S SOCCER TEAM TOOK A TRIP TO ENGLAND THIS PAST AUGUST. PHOTO BY THE WOMEN'S SOCCER INSTAGRAM.

and got to spend quality time with our new coach in the process. Along with sightseeing, playing football everyday gave the team a great jumpstart into preseason. Watching the Arsenal versus Man City game the first day was the coolest part of the trip for sure. Being surrounded by the culture was truly a once in a life[time] experience for us."

When the opportunities arose during the week to play local teams in London and Manchester, the opposing players welcomed Muhlenberg with appreciation, competitiveness and great sportsmanship. The team's time spent bonding off the field during the trip directly translated into their play on the field. Connecting passes, communicating and scoring goals seemed to become more seamless as the week progressed. These achievements led the mules to earn a 3-0 win streak during their time abroad.

Captain Bri Astbury '24 added, "The Premier League game atmosphere was something that I personally enjoyed a lot because you can tell how passionate the fan bases are about their team and sport as soccer is pretty much their whole world.

Playing in international friendly matches is definitely something that I won't forget. I believe that going undefeated in those matches while playing our style of play gave us a huge boost of confidence coming into preseason where we had to prepare to play some of the top teams in the country."

In addition to the soccer aspect of the trip, the players found themselves becoming immersed in London city life and learning opportunities. Astbury continued, "The trip to England was truly one of the best experiences I've had so far here at Muhlenberg. In the eight days we were there, we got to experience so many different things as a team. Whether it was trying fish and chips all together, watching Premier League games, touring some of the most iconic stadiums in the UK or exploring the cities of London and Manchester on our own, I think we were all just in awe of what an awesome opportunity the trip really was."

Touring the Tower of London, grabbing lunch in the famous Borough Market, staring up at Big Ben, shopping along Oxford street and standing outside the gates of Buckingham Palace

were all notable moments from the team's time spent in the lively city. Defender, Grace Chopra '26, adds, "Going on the London Eye with some of my teammates was probably one of my favorite moments this summer and I'm really happy I could go."

Voluntarily partaking in the trip at their personal expense, the players took advantage of every moment and experience. Towards the end of the week, the team visited their final destination of Liverpool. Lucy Atwood '24 stated, "Touring Liverpool stadium and spending the afternoon in the city of Liverpool may have been my favorite part of the trip. A few of us explored the Beatles Museum and even ate dinner at the Cavern Restaurant, which was where the Beatles performed together for the very first time. Toward the end of the night, we picked up some dessert and sat out by the port together while enjoying the view. I will always remember it."

The trip definitely served the team well, as they powered through pre-season winning both scrimmages and eventually winning their first home game against Elizabethtown College on Fri, Sept. 1.

Astbury summarizes the experience perfectly, "Getting to go abroad with a team that I love so much was truly something that I'll cherish forever!"

Coming up this week in

SPORTS

Sept. 7-13

Volleyball	Football	Men's Soccer	Women's Soccer
<div>MUHLENBERG vs BARD</div>	<div>MUHLENBERG vs SALISBURY</div>	<div>MUHLENBERG vs DESALES</div>	<div>MUHLENBERG vs FDU-FLORHAM</div>
Fri, Sept. 8 @ 3:00 p.m. Memorial Hall	Sat, Sept. 9 @ 12:00 p.m. Scotty Wood Stadium	Tues, Sept. 12 @ 7:00 p.m. Varsity Field	Wed, Sept. 13 @ 7:00 p.m. Varsity Field

For students past and present, Alumni Weekend is an occasion for all.

By AMY SWARTZ
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

This past week, all of campus was bustling for Alumni Weekend, which took place from Sept. 8 to Sept. 10. The Alumni Affairs Office put together 49 events for Muhlenberg alumni, with class years ending in 3 and 8 celebrating special milestone reunions. All facets of campus life helped support, plan and create an amazing weekend filled to the brim with fun and educational events for Muhlenberg graduates.

Alumni Weekend had a fantastic turnout, with 1,089 alumni pre-registered to attend, and more coming to various events throughout the weekend. Various departments were vital in the success of the weekend, including Plant Operations, Campus Safety, housekeeping, Red Door Catering, 'Berg Production and many more.

The weekend kicked off with an alumni golf outing at Brookside Country Club on Friday morning, followed throughout the day with campus tours, sporting events and the "Classes Without Quizzes" program.

"Classes Without Quizzes" gives alumni the opportunity to sit in on lectures with professors, some of which they may have had during their time here, on a variety of subjects. Alumni can choose to attend as many events as they'd like. English Professor Charles F. French, Ph.D.,

'Berg Belongs to Alumni for a Weekend



partook in the program, leading the lecture "What Books Do We Love?" He left the alumni with not only a brand new list of book recommendations to consider but also a reinvigorated love for literature.

Friday night was completed with "An Evening of Distinction," in which honors were bestowed to students and alumni for their

accomplishments and allowed them to connect and learn from one another. Justin Billich '24 reflected on his experience, describing how "It was incredible to be around so many distinguished alumni. [I loved] to hear their stories, oftentimes with a notion of 'back in my day.' The Evening of Distinction was a beautiful event, highlighting

current and former success stories at Muhlenberg, compiling them into the narrative of success here at Muhlenberg."

Saturday afternoon included a tailgate with areas for alumni celebrating milestone reunions to catch up and have fun. Following the tailgate was a football game versus Salisbury

[SEE ALUMNI PAGE 4](#)

Lehigh Valley's questionable quality of life

By MATTHEW BARESH
CO-NEWS EDITOR

Muhlenberg's Institute of Public Opinion (IPO) recently released a survey titled "Lehigh Valley Quality of Life Survey: Resident Perceptions of Environmental Quality." The survey was conducted by Christopher Borick, Ph.D., professor of political science and director of the Muhlenberg College IPO, Cydney Wilson '23, Anthony Merchlinsky '24 and Cathy Barrish '24. These contributors aimed to show the increasing concerns of Lehigh Valley residents for the environmental quality of their surroundings. The survey explores three main topics: loss of open spaces (forests, farms, etc.), air quality and water quality.

"The environmental questions were part of a broader study on perceptions of quality of life that was a partnership between the IPO, LehighValleyNews.com, The Lehigh Valley Partnership and the Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation," explained Borick.

For the study, 631 adult residents of Lehigh and Northampton counties were interviewed via telephone in Sept. and Oct. of 2022. Each respondent was asked to assess their level of concern with the three topics in their community. The data was then analyzed and categorized by "gender, age, race and educational attainment to 2022 population parameters for Lehigh and Northampton counties," according to the survey.

[SEE QUALITY PAGE 4](#)

Memories & Museums

A walk through our history at our nation's capital.

By KABIR BURMAN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

"There is always evil going on in our society. Even when you think everything is fine, nothing can be fine," said Max Kurzweil '27, when reflecting on his recent trip to D.C..

On Sunday, Sept. 3, around fifty Muhlenberg students as well as faculty from Hillel, the Office of Multicultural Life and Housing & Residence Life boarded a bus for Washington, D.C. to visit the US Holocaust Memorial Museum and the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

So why did students apply to this trip, wake up at 6:00 a.m. and brave the expected 96 degrees Fahrenheit to travel for over three hours to Washington?

For some, it remained a personal choice that stemmed from their own background and history. "It was personally important to me because I am Jewish and wanted to experience the Holocaust Museum firsthand and to have my own experience and knowledge of it," Kurzweil shared.

This effort to look back upon personal backgrounds and faiths was a common thread amongst many of the students, but not all of them.

"The trip was important for me to attend because it is history that needs to be taught to everybody," explained Johnny

[SEE MEMORIES PAGE 4](#)



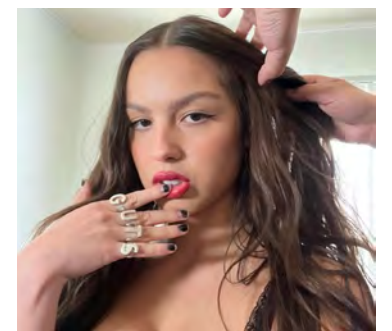
NEWS

Men of Color Network welcomes new members.
[read more on page 3](#)



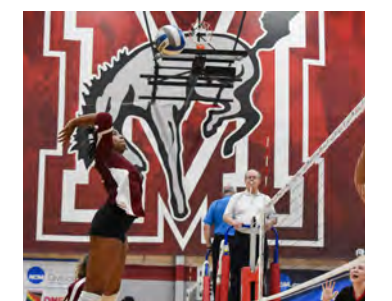
ARTS & CULTURE

New exhibit debuts in Martin Art Gallery.
[read more on page 7](#)



OP/ED

Student spills their guts on new Olivia Rodrigo album.
[read more on page 9](#)



SPORTS

'Berg volleyball emerges victorious.
[read more on page 10](#)

THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY

Serving the Muhlenberg College Community since 1883

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We request that advertising material be submitted by the Monday preceding publication at 5 p.m. If materials have not been received at that time, the advertisement will not run and the advertiser is still responsible for 100% payment. We reserve the right to decline any advertisement that is misleading, inaccurate, fraudulent, or deemed generally unacceptable. This determination will be made by the Business Staff in consultation with the Editor-in-Chief. The Muhlenberg Weekly maintains a distinction between its news & editorial content and advertising. As such, advertisements will not be accepted if they imitate the general style of The Weekly, intentionally or unintentionally. Examples of this include, but are not limited to: headlines, bylines, fonts, and column-arrangements. In order to make this distinction, The Weekly also reserves the right to include the word “advertisement” on any advertisement that is deemed too native.

CAMPUS SAFETY NOTES

9/2/23
Liquor law—Report of liquor law violation in the Village.
Suspicious person—Report of suspicious person at Scotty Wood Stadium.
Suspicious person—Report of suspicious person at a Mile House.
Liquor law—Report of liquor law violation in a MILE house.
Liquor law—Report of liquor law violation on Leh Street.

9/3/23
Liquor law—Report of liquor law violation in Seegers Union.
Noise Complaint—Report of a noise complaint in Prosser Hall

9/4/23
Suspicious person—Report of suspicious person at Trexler Library.

9/5/23
Suspicious person—Report of suspicious person at Scotty Wood Stadium

9/6/23
Injured Student—Report of in-

jured student on Leh Street.
Fire Alarms— Report of fire alarms at N23rd Street

9/7/23
Fire Alarms— Report of fire alarms on Leh Street



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Men of Color Network looks to welcome new members

By JONATHAN LEWIS
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

It's the second week of classes and down Academic Row walks Chris, a freshman from Brooklyn, New York. With Notorious B.I.G.'s "Hypnotize" blasting in his headphones, reminding him of his Bed-Stuy neighborhood, he looks around and sees countless friend groups. Whether it be on the Great Lawn tossing a frisbee or chatting as they leave the dining hall, Chris is reminded that he hasn't yet found his group.

For students like Chris, Men of Color Network (MCN) provides not only a support system, but a brotherhood forged through bi-weekly meetings, volunteer work and even off-campus outings.

Men of Color Network was started in 2019 by Zaire Carter '22 and Robin Chodak '22. The duo founded the affinity



The Men of Color Network at their first meeting of the semester.

group with the intention of strengthening the bond between young men of color on campus while also equipping them with the necessary networking skills to thrive as young adults in the post-graduate world.

This past year, the Men of

Color Network, under the new leadership of Matthew McCray '24, Darain Khan '25, Ibrahim Sidibeh '25, Maridie Niare '26, Yusuf Abdulkarimu '26 and myself Jonathan Lewis '24, have hosted a series of notable events including a "Dress Up



provoking conversations with the goal of learning more, the Men of Color Network is a safe haven for the students it serves.

As the 2023-2024 academic year kicks off, the Men of Color Network invites those who see fit to join the organization as the team foresees a jam-packed calendar with events guaranteed to strengthen the brotherhood of young men of color on campus.

We're looking forward to a great year for the Men of Color Network. We have an amazing team of guys that are passionate about this organization and more importantly passionate about strengthening the bond between the young men of color at Muhlenberg College.

Wednesday," "Karaoke Night" and even more substantial events such as "A Conversation on Black Love," and an organization favorite, "Barbershop Talk." By creating spaces on campus for young men of color to not only have fun but also have thought-

Alumni thought 'Berg belonged to them

By AMY SWARTZ
GENERAL EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

While Alumni Weekend is a time of celebration for alumni, students and staff, this most recent weekend also entailed a time of stress and violation for some students. Multiple students have come forward with reports of alumni ignoring their boundaries and barging into residence halls, greek life houses and individual dorm rooms.

Eva Schwartz '26, Brown Hall resident, details her experiences interacting with alumni this weekend. "There were a few forty-something-year-old ladies wandering around my floor and I could hear them outside. They were very clearly alumni and I heard them get closer to my room and one of them said something along the lines of 'this was my dorm and this one next to it was my friends dorm.' They knocked on my next door neighbors' door and I'm not sure whether they answered it or not. Next thing I knew, they opened my door and I gave them

a weird look and shut it. I'm sure that it was some kind of mix up, but I still think that it was very disrespectful because these are in fact no longer their dorms and different people live here now."

Faculty Advisor for Cardinal Key Jess Deemer and Cardinal Key Member Johnny Veglia '24 both detailed how during their alumni tours, various alumni asked if they could go into their old residence halls.

Veglia reflected on his training for Cardinal Key saying, "we're specifically instructed to never allow any alumni to go into any residence halls."

Carly Langschultz '25, resident of the Phi Sigma Sigma house, recounted her experience this weekend. "I really love that our alumni are always excited to come back to campus, it's awesome that we get to meet them and share stories with them. However, as a person who can become pretty anxious in a new living situation, it felt pretty uncomfortable having them and their children be so in my space, especially so early on in the semester. I was concerned

all day that someone would knock on my door as I knew they were discussing trying to go into people's rooms."

A student that would prefer to remain anonymous detailed their experience this weekend and the disrespect of various alumni in their on-campus place of residence. "We let alumni come and look around, and after they left, we realized they left their bottles of alcohol in our bathroom. We have people under 21 living there, so if we didn't realize, we could've gotten in trouble, which isn't great considering we did them a favor to begin with."

The alleged entitlement that alumni felt they had, culminated into their treatment of places of residence for all students across campus this weekend, leaving some students feeling violated and alarmed at the ease of alumni entering residence halls, as well as their behavior when invited into homes on campus.

PHOTO BY JOHNNY VEGLIA '24



A drone show at Alumni weekend.



FROM **QUALITY** PAGE 1

A survey of this scale is bound to come with challenges: according to Borick, “reaching a representative sample of adults in the Lehigh Valley is challenging and requires a significant amount of effort and resources. The project took quite a few weeks for interviews to be completed, and significant time for additional work to design the instrument, weigh the data and to write the report.”

Despite the challenges, numerous key findings were discovered from the survey. The report found that “Lehigh Valley residents express significant levels of concern regarding the loss of open space in the region with three out of four Lehigh and Northampton county residents either ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ concerned with this matter.” In addition, “About a third of Lehigh Valley residents expressed concerns about the quality of air and drinking water quality in the region.”

Other findings focused on a wide range of identities in the Lehigh Valley. In regards to race, “White residents expressed more concern about the loss of open space than people of color, while people of color showed more concern about air quality and water quality than their white counterparts.” In regards to gender, the survey found that “Those who identified as female were more likely to have concerns about air quality, water quality and the loss of open space than those identifying as male,” according to the study.

“This survey was essential to conduct as it allows us to understand the community members from not only a governance perspective but also from a relatability standpoint,” shared Barrish. “The biggest thing about this survey is ensuring a continued discussion about sustainability. We need to be aware of issues in order to solve them.”

Merchlinsky echoed this sentiment when working on the project, saying, “I think what inspired me most was not simply looking at environmental concerns but looking at the concerns about the quality of life as a whole within the Lehigh Valley. It is important to understand these different concerns and perceptions of local residents...”

Students gave their input on their experience of living in the Lehigh Valley, whether it be for four years or their entire lives. When considering the three main factors explored in the survey, one anonymous student who is not a Lehigh Valley resident explained, “I’m concerned about the drinking water quality since the water that comes out of the sink literally just smells like chlorine.”

“I do feel quite a bit concerned about losing open space,” explained Britney Bonhomme ‘24, another Lehigh

Valley resident. “As a resident of 10 years, I’ve seen my hometown, Whitehall, build dozens of buildings that used to be beautiful trees. An example of this is happening right down the street from us on Cedar Crest Boulevard and Walbert Avenue. There is beautiful open land that’s being destroyed by hideous construction and a new building is being built but no one knows what it is yet. It would be beneficial for a daycare or garden to be built there but I doubt that is happening. As for air quality and water quality, I think that it could definitely be improved but at the moment it isn’t too dire of an issue.”

Lehigh Valley resident and public health major Ethan Yazdanyar ‘25 shared, “I definitely feel concerned since I’m from the Lehigh Valley and we’re known for bad air and water quality. It’s concerning since I have a lot of family members who live here too, and

younger siblings who are also affected by it, and with more industrialization happening it doesn’t seem like it’s going to get any better.”

While the survey served as an informative report for the public on these environmental factors, it was also used as a catalyst. “... we haven’t focused on this issue in Lehigh Valley studies,” shared Borick. “In upcoming years we hope to be able to field studies of local residents on climate-related matters.”

Merchlinsky followed with “I hope this report serves as a baseline of understanding so people can come together and recognize each other’s viewpoints and different perceptions leading us to a greater understanding of one another and our various concerns.”

Working towards a sustainable future means change on a local level, starting right here in the Lehigh Valley.

FROM **ALUMNI** PAGE 1

One ‘03 alumni, who chose to remain anonymous because of her career, discussed how Muhlenberg helped her in the professional world. “I have an amazing career, and I owe it all to Muhlenberg and the advisor I had junior and senior year, Dr. Jeff Rudski, because without him I wouldn’t have the career I have in forensic psychology.” She also elaborated on the love she has for Alumni Weekend, and how special it is, as “the same core group comes back every milestone. It’s nice because there’s so many extended friendships, too, that I still get to see again and again.” She concluded by saying that “Muhlenberg gets all of the credit for how I grew up as a person, how I learned empathy, and how I learned how to deal with it all.”

In tandem with the alumni tailgate, the Homecoming Fair was happening on the campus green, complete with performances from different ensembles on campus, bouncy houses for alumni and their families, a petting zoo, carnival food and much more. Alumni and their families could be found on the green for hours, taking part in all of the fun family festivities.

which ended in a win for the Mules.

The Alumni Author Reception in Trexler Library also took place on Saturday, where published Muhlenberg alumni had the opportunity to share their works with one another and take audiences and other authors through their creative process. This reception is a great way to pay homage to many of the talented alums who have done significant work in their field. It also gives student audience members a glimpse into a potential career field that might be of interest, providing them with the ability to talk one-on-one with successful writers who were once in their shoes.

Along with Saturday night being complete with various athletic teams holding games with outstanding alumni attendance, Alumni Affairs held “Berg Bash: Cheers to the Years,” where alumni ranging from ‘83 to ‘23 had the opportunity to come together and celebrate, complete with lots of food, prizes and dancing.

Student volunteers were an essential component of the weekend, with 32 students from the Cardinal Key Society helping at various events, along with providing golf cart rides to alumni, giving campus tours and even dressing up as Marti the Mule for alumni and their families.

Jem Berney ‘26, resident Marti the Mule for the weekend, reflected on his experiences as a Cardinal Key volunteer. “Well I think it’s just a really great opportunity to see those who came before me, and I was lucky enough to be able to attend the Evening of Distinction as a guest. I sat with a table of alumni and we talked about all things Muhlenberg and all things careers, and it was just really great to kind of get a glimpse of my future and what professionalism is really like.”

The impact that alumni have on current students is monumental, and the connections made during Alumni Weekend prove that to be influential year after year. Alumni Weekend is fantastic as it not only allows alumni to reconnect with one another through the years, but it also gives alumni the opportunity to reflect on their time here, and the broader role that Muhlenberg has played in their life.

Jake Milunsky ‘03, took a look back on his time here and how it has helped him throughout not only his career but his life. “I think that this school is such a diamond, such a treasure, and if you come here with an open mind, you’ll discover so much about yourself and live a better life because you’re so confident in who you’ve become.”

FROM **MEMORIES** PAGE 1

Rappoccio ‘27, going further to mention that “a lot of this history is trying to be erased so it’s everyone’s job to educate themselves on our history and other countries’ histories.”

The exhibits themselves provided multiple opportunities for museum-goers to further educate themselves. Whether it was newsreel footage, recreated physical structures or multiple pictures and graphics curated across the exhibits, the displays allowed students to truly immerse themselves and learn more about periods of history that are often relegated to a limited number of pages on our high school history textbooks.

“When we first entered the Holocaust Museum, I was instantly pulled in as my eyes were attached to the pictures and readings around me,” mentioned Rappoccio. “The opening picture you see when you walk out of the elevator is so eerie and gut-wrenching that you need to let your mind rest a little before informing yourself on as much as you can.”

Meanwhile, the information that caught Kurzweil’s attention the most was found at the National Museum of African American History & Culture. Kurzweil learned that “in 1969 when Apollo 11 took off to the moon... the US spent so much money on that while not focusing on African Americans that were in poverty during this time...”

Others, such as Asher Bejar ‘26, made it a point to take advantage of the chance

to educate himself, “When I first heard about this trip, I knew I wanted to go. Learning is a passion of mine, and to learn about the history of two very important groups of people in our nation was an opportunity I couldn’t miss,” said Bejar.

Robin Riley-Casey, the director of the Office of Multicultural Life on campus, mentioned when sitting down for an interview that “The work for inclusion is something that you need to be vigilant for; you really need to focus on and be intentional about paying attention to the way the world operates.”

“I have always felt a disconnect between Black and Jewish people. Even though the oppression that both groups have faced are completely different, I think in order to have a deeper understanding of one another it is important that we learn from both traumas in order to not repeat them,” said Josephine Glass ‘27, alluding to yet another crucial reason behind the trip.

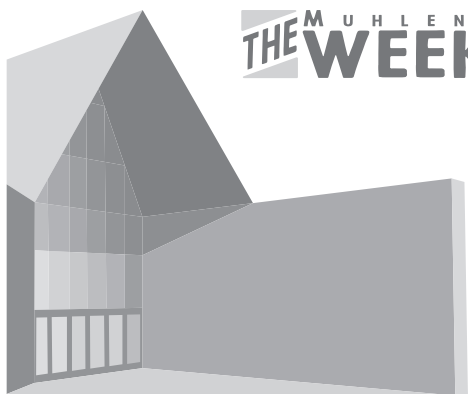
Ira Blum ‘10, the director of The Leffell Center for Jewish Life, shared why he chose to attend the trip beyond his role as an organizer, saying, “the spirit of the student life experience here [is] one of building relationships and reaching across differences, getting outside of your own comfort zone and your bubble.”

In a time where it is becoming increasingly harder for us to get past our differences and disconnects, this trip reminded many students of the importance of having those difficult conversations.



A group of students at the Washington Monument.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KABIR BURMAN ‘27



THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY

/ARTS & CULTURE

“You were once wild here. Don’t let them tame you.”

- Isadora Duncan

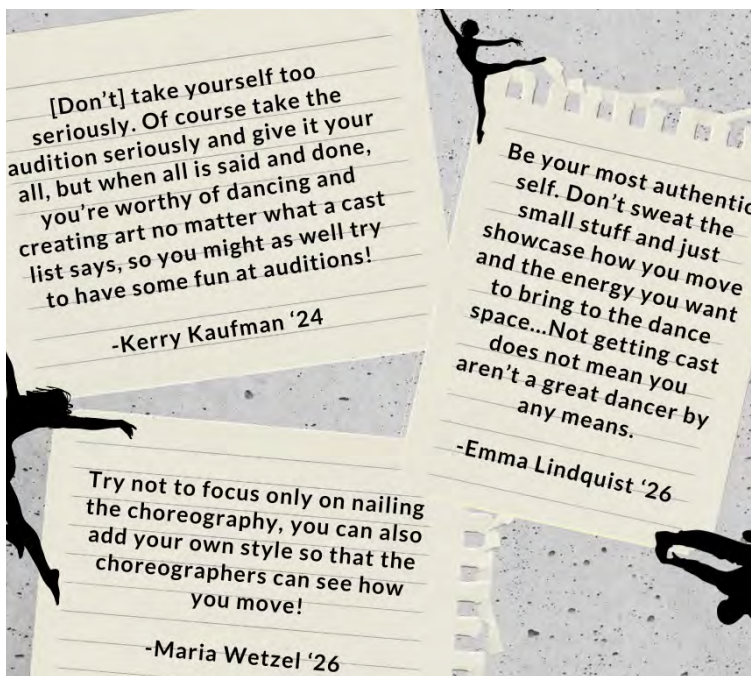
Resetting the way we look at the audition process

BY KEANNA PEÑA
MANAGING EDITOR

On Sept. 4 and 5, the Dance Department held auditions for “Reset: New Dances,” an annual student-choreographed dance show. This year, dancers enrolled in Advanced Composition II were set with the task of hosting auditions, and will create their own five-to-seven minute piece. “Reset” will premiere Nov. 16-18.

I’m relatively new to the dance world, as I had never stepped into a dance studio before college. So, in this article I’m going to share what my experience was like auditioning for “Reset,” along with other dancers and even the choreographers who held auditions.

This year, because there are 12 choreographers who all have different styles and ideas for their pieces, auditions were split into two days from 7:00-9:00 p.m. There were four different audition groups of three choreographers each. On each day, two groups of three choreographers would audition dancers for their pieces using a



short combination with elements of their style. That being said, if one went to every audition, you learned four different combinations and danced for four sets of choreographers.

It sounds like a lot, I know, but in this way, if you were having an off day, or even an off hour, you would have a clean slate for the next set of choreographers.

Emma Lindquist ‘26 shared, “I appreciated that each section

of the audition had different choreography and their own vibes. It was fun getting to learn all the material.”

Regarding her reasoning as to why she auditioned for “Reset,” Maria Wetzel ‘26 shared, “I auditioned for ‘Reset’ because it’s inspiring to be a part of the process of creating a dance piece. The student-choreographed shows have a different vibe than the faculty show. It feels

like a community of dancers supporting each other, and there’s so much to learn from the other students.”

Auditioning for literally anything can be scary, but auditioning for a dance show at Muhlenberg is pretty great. While I have auditioned for “In Motion ‘23” and “Dance Emerge ‘23,” two dance shows that premiere annually in the spring, this was my first time auditioning for “Reset.” That being said, I found it really comforting that Reset auditions were held in the spaces where I usually have my dance classes. My familiarity with the space helped me feel comfortable being myself.

Rowan Hauk ‘25 agreed, saying, “As someone that has the perspective of auditioning for a lot of summer intensives and companies over the years, Muhlenberg is a very warm and inviting audition space, which is a huge rarity. You just won’t experience the same cutthroat [attitude] or vindictiveness that you find in a lot of the corporate dance spaces.”

One of the choreographers for this year’s “Reset,” Kerry Kaufman ‘24, who has also

auditioned for many Muhlenberg dance shows, shared, “I think Muhlenberg auditions are a kind of gift. The environment is mostly very kind and supportive; the other dancers in the room are typically classmates and friends. Knowing the people in the room has taken [the] stress out of auditions for me in the past here at ‘Berg; I feel relaxed and have the ability to remain present in the room. Auditions here have provided opportunities to practice auditioning where the stakes are low and therefore have built my confidence in my ability to attend and perform during auditions.”

I’ve learned that when auditioning for a dance show, it’s best to always show up at least 15 minutes early. It gives you ample time to check in and warm up, which is absolutely necessary as you don’t want to injure yourself. At the “Reset” audition, it began with the choreographers introducing themselves and sharing more information about their piece.

For the next hour, we learned a short combination, had time to ourselves to practice it on our own and went through it

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The Center for Ethics *an invitation to the conversation*

BY SHAIYAN FEISAL
ASST. A&C EDITOR

On Sept. 6, the Center of Ethics had their opening event for this year’s theme, “The Ethics of the Image,” at Miller Forum. It featured a faculty panel who specialized in a variety of disciplines. These faculty members included Professor of English & Africana Studies Emanuela Kucik, Ph.D., Professor of Media & Communication Jefferson Pooley, Ph.D., Professor of Art History Elena FitzPatrick Sifford, Ph.D., and Stanley Road Professor of Neuroscience Jeremy Teissere, Ph.D.

The co-directors of the program are Professor of Media & Communication Paul McEwan, Ph.D., and Elena FitzPatrick Sifford, Ph.D. McEwan started the event by saying, “[We are] much more likely to believe things we have seen rather than what we cannot see. [For example,] science is more believable if we have seen it in comparison to things we haven’t seen.”

When asked about the

theme, McEwan stated, “We should emphasize that although a Center [of Ethics] theme of ‘The Ethics of the Image’ sounds like it would weigh heavily on art and film and related fields, we really want to consider the ways in which images create ethical concerns across disciplines. A long term goal of the Center for Ethics has been to explore the types of interdisciplinary questions that create connections across campus and draw links between the apparently different types of intellectual work that Muhlenberg students and professors do together. This year’s program will continue that tradition.”

FitzPatrick Sifford’s talk was titled “Representing the Black Body: A Broad View of Depicting Bodily Comportment & Racialization from Colonization to the Present.” She looked at how art has portrayed Black people over time in both a dishonoring and empowering perspective. She used a quote from Krista Thompson, Ph.D., professor of art history at Northwestern University, saying, “Who knew better the

meaning and uses of the visual in Western society than those who were defined as Black, as other, as property, based on the surface appearance of their skins?” In one piece of artwork that lacked color, the artist used a cross hatching technique, which was able to show dark skin even with no color. In this piece, Blackness was portrayed as a sin and there was an attempt to clean this Blackness off the body. In contrast, in “Abolitionist Medallion” by Josiah Wedgwood, a ceramic medallion that was created to promote the abolition of the slave trade. This medal was given out at abolition society meetings to promote the cause.

The Emancipation Memorial by Thomas Ball shows “Lincoln [as] the great white savior while the Black man is kneeling... The subordinate pose convey[s] meaning about racialized hierarchies.” The monument has received criticism for its paternalistic character of the slave pictured in the memorial. In fact, Frederick Douglass said that the statue “showed the negro on his knees when a more manly attitude would have been indicative of freedom.” Kneeling

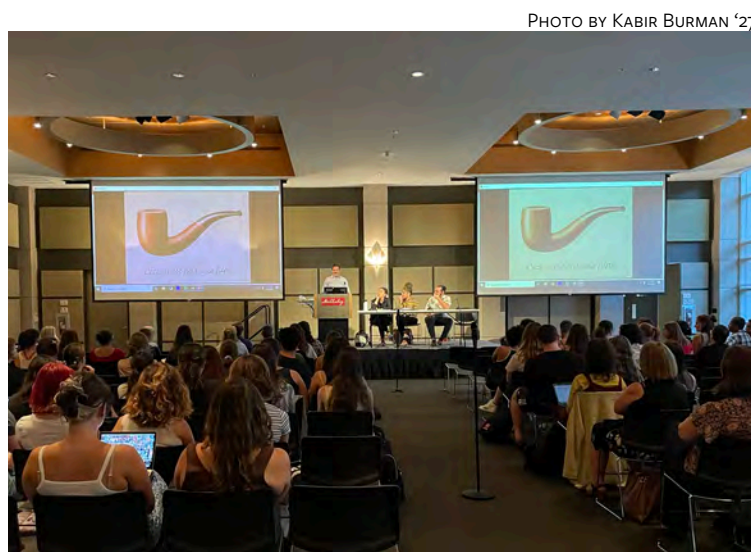


PHOTO BY KABIR BURMAN '27

Panel members of “The Ethics of the Image” talk on Wednesday

can have different meanings depending on the context. In 2016, football player Colin Kaepernick knelt before a match when the national anthem played because he couldn’t stand to exhibit pride and respect for a flag of a country that oppressed Black people and perpetuated systemic racism. To conclude, Sifford said the “power of image [is used] as a means of communication, protest, and hopefully change.”

Kucik’s talk was titled “We Charge Genocide: Lynching,

Genocide, and the Role of Imagery in Perpetuating and Dismantling Anti-Black Violence.” Kucik started by defining lynching as “violent public acts that white populations used to terrorize and control Black populations. [This includes] torture, mutilations, people burned alive and public display. Photographs of lynching [were] sold as souvenir postcards. These postcards were used to dehumanize Black people. These images allowed them to celebrate anti-Black

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PHOTO COURTESY OF @MUHLENBERGSASA ON INSTAGRAM.



The debut of SASA

Top Naach changes their name to South Asian Students Association

By **SINHAYANA SRINIVASAN**
STAFF WRITER

Get the word out: Top Naach, from this year onward, will now be known as the South Asian Student Association (SASA).

Top Naach was a South Asian performance group that was a space for both individuals of South Asian descent and others to join and enjoy South Asian culture. Their group hosted the Diwali and Holi celebrations, which were some of the biggest cultural events on campus. Top Naach even won the President’s Award, as it was a very well-formed and managed club.

So why did Top Naach decide to make an arguably big decision on changing their name and vision? “We had a couple of different reasons,” Shobha Pai ‘24, president of SASA said. “We looked at the members of our

community, and dance wasn’t the only focus they needed. And while it was an important component of Top Naach, we realized that Top Naach could expand in a more intentional and meaningful way. That led to the name change as well.” The new executive board (E-board) of Top Naach felt that they wanted to refocus the priority of being a performance group to more of an affinity space for South Asian students. Top Naach being perceived as a dance group deterred many people from joining, even those of South Asian background. Thus, the E-board took the important decision of rebranding and changing their vision to help facilitate as much inclusion as possible.

But while Top Naach might now be SASA, it doesn’t mean that they have forgotten about the past. They still have a dance

component to the group for those who are interested in performing. An unknown event for most was the fun “Chat with Chai” sessions that were discontinued due to COVID. SASA hopes to bring that back. They will also be planning the Diwali and Holi events with the same love and passion that their predecessors did, and hope to have an even bigger celebration to honor the graduated members who have worked so hard to bring South Asian culture to Muhlenberg. Vish Dsouza ‘26, vice president of SASA, stated, “We are planning to celebrate other festivals, but that doesn’t mean we will take the essence of Top Naach away from campus!”

For this coming year, SASA is very excited about all the new collaborations they could be part of. Due to their prior classification as dancing group, they were very limited in who

they could collaborate with, but with the rebranding, it has opened various new avenues for them to tread down. Something the members of the E-board are all looking forward to is collaborating with the Muslim Student Association for a henna fundraiser. Pai commented that she is really looking forward to the henna fundraiser, as it “showcases the unity in South Asian culture by doing a fun and creative activity. And also, who doesn’t like henna?”

There was also a strong turn out of interested first-years and new members after the club fair, which can bring a whole new flux of ideas into events and activities for the club. Sabeen Safi ‘26, treasurer of SASA, said, “I’m most excited for all the new members because there were a lot of people who wanted to be part of the South Asian community but were uncomfortable with the dancing aspect of it, so I’m really excited to broaden our membership this year.”

The goals and objectives of SASA revolve around making it more inclusive and creating a space for the voices of South Asian students. They have events and activities planned that talk about the South Asian experience specifically, and one of the most important objectives is being respectful of the vast diaspora that is “South Asian.” They also want to foster unity on campus without segregating the South Asian population from the rest of the college. An important part of being from different cultures and backgrounds is educating those around you about those differences and celebrating them together. This is why SASA is open to anyone

and is looking forward to people of different cultures and backgrounds joining the club. Events planned for SASA, such as Diwali, Holi, Chat with Chai, Paint and Sip and more, are open and everyone is encouraged to come. Safi said, “We also want to broaden the festivals we’re celebrating so we hope to collaborate with other groups on campus and broaden the cultures we’re representing.” For more information about times and dates you can check them out on Instagram @muhlenbergsasa.

Most importantly, SASA is a space for the South Asian community to feel safe and accepted. Marilyn Rajesh ‘26, public relations head of SASA noted that the organization is “where you feel like you come home to a community that we’ve built on campus. It is a safe space to talk about whatever we want, to share our passions and our visions with people who have a common background.”

Being in an affinity group can be a rewarding experience and it is always nice to meet other people who can understand you in ways related to your heritage and roots.

Dsouza stated how she was eager for the new group to debut this year and that “being in an affinity group means being understood to a certain extent, being able to relate to experiences and share a sense of commonality and belonging within a group of people that probably look like you or have grown up with similar experiences.”

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Berg welcomes Rhonda Wall for opening reception

Martin Art Gallery showcases a portfolio of bright colors

By Emma Northrop
Contributing Writer

On Sept. 7 the Martin Art Gallery hosted artist Rhonda Wall for the Artist Talk and opening reception for the exhibition “How Do We Survive? Everything Happens at the Same Time.”

Stepping into the Gallery, the room is a unique sensory experience, the ear descends into a realm of hushed murmurs from respectful patrons while the eye is greeted by the vibrant colors and abstract figures of Wall’s collages. The collages range in size, the smallest (“Boosted,” 2021) being 14”x11” and the largest (“Supply Chain,” 2021) being 36”x 96” and spanning nearly the entire right side of the entrance wall. Following the artist talk, Wall could be found floating about the space, conversing with eager attendees about the inspiration for her work and minute details that caught each individual’s eye. Nola Thompson ‘27 verbalized this phenomena when she stated, “You could look at these pieces 20 to 30 hundred times and see different details and different meanings every time.” Rhonda Wall herself is just as creative and complex as her collages. A 1978 graduate from



The Martin Art Gallery debuts Rhonda Wall’s pieces.

the Rhode Island School of Design, Wall has created work that spans medium and time. A prominent figure in the East Side art scene of New York City in the 1980s, her works were displayed in both the Sensory Evolution and B-Side Galleries. She has also created performance-based art, with past projects including “Russian Fantasia” (1993-1994), which contained collage but also dance, costume and textile work and a performance piece titled, “Who Am I and Destroy Telephones” (1979), which she wrote, directed and starred in. As Wall’s collages are uniquely intricate, many attending her artist talk wanted to know just how she goes about creating them. In both the Q&A and

discussions with The Weekly, Wall explained that she starts her collages by painting a geometric non-objective background. When it comes to the collage, she doesn’t save material. When she wants to create, she utilizes her own photography, magazines, books and the Internet to gather components. Often, she finds an image and asks herself, “What would I put with this?” Wall explained that, more often than not, it is “really like what’s going on then.” “Every day is a different story,” she states, “and then I’ll work on a piece.” She utilizes what happens in her life as a starting point, allowing her to create work “that can be beautiful and horrific at the same time.”

Macy Sauder ‘27 expressed appreciation for Wall’s process, saying that seeing it allowed her to see “what the work was and what it became.” The pieces in this exhibition all seek to answer the question: How do we survive? While the concept can seem rather heavy, and Wall’s collages do cover serious topics such as the January 6th Insurrection, Mueller Report and COVID-19 pandemic, Wall told The Weekly that she seeks to “represent the difficult times we live in and the beauty that’s out there still.” One of her works which accomplishes this most evidently is “The Car Wash, Bird’s Nest, and the Report” (2019). As the name suggests, this work has three

main focuses. Wall revealed that when she started making it, she had intended to create something more lighthearted, drawing on the beautiful purples of a carwash she had gone through and the turquoise of a bird’s nest she stumbled upon. However, while doing so, the Mueller report came out. The purples and turquoise are not made any less vibrant by the inclusion of the Mueller report, yet the collage acknowledges that all of these events with various emotional consequences occurred at the same time. Wall noted that, “With what’s happening in the world, we tend to not see the humor,” however, she maintained that, “We have to keep our sense of humor, otherwise we won’t keep going.” When speaking with The Weekly, Wall revealed her answer to the omnipresent question of survival: “How do we survive? The answer is with hope.” As for the second part of the exhibition’s title, Wall approached this within her artist talk, stating, “Everything happens at the same time... life goes on.” Martin Art Gallery Director Jessica Ambler remarked that Wall “has been teaching in the area and is well known in the Lehigh Valley arts community.” According to Ambler, this exhibit has been highly anticipated, as it “had been planned pre-COVID.” “How Do We Survive? Everything Happens at the Same Time” can be found at the Martin Art Gallery in the CA until Oct. 6.

FROM ETHICS PAGE 5

violence. They were used as teaching tools for many generations of white people to see these Black people in this state. They were teaching young children that this was the right way to see Black people.” Kucik ended her talk saying how “a video or image can cause tangible change.” Teissere, Stanley Road Professor of Neuroscience’s talk was titled “The Thickness of the Image: Codes, Contingencies, and Spectral Choices.” He focused on “how images are made and then how those images are used or rather what those images can do.” He referenced how the falsification of images can even happen in academia. For example, he discussed how the previous President of Stanford Marc Tessier-Lavigne, Ph.D., was guilty of authoring lab reports that had forged information including digitally altered images and blot results taken from other papers. Teissere commented, “detection is really hard. Academic peer review journals are not well researched to detect fraud.” Tessier-Lavigne ended up resigning due to the forgery found in his research. Teissere stated the importance of images as “I think we need to care how images are made, and how technology (& our access to it and understanding of it) as well as the shadowy hand of the market deeply influence how images are made. That is, that they aren’t simply ‘pictures’ that we share - and that in science especially, how images are made affects how we name and consider ‘the truth.’ If dishonest data fools us into thinking they tell us something ‘true,’ our understanding of phenomena can become distorted, with major ramifications on policy,

“We are much more likely to believe things we have seen rather than what we have not.”

politics, regulation of the market, and what we think reality really is.” Pooley’s talk was titled “The Image Medium is the Ethical Message.” His point was “to show that there are interesting ethical implications one can draw from looking at the image as a particular medium, with formal properties like stillness, silence, all-at-once perception and the like.” Pooley emphasized that “images are still, motionless and static. They are silent and don’t speak back.” Kabir Burman ‘27 stated, “I like the idea of the themes they were discussing, especially the transatlantic slavery part. As someone who is interested in photojournalism, I’m interested in how an image can influence narratives. Dr. Sifford mentioned how images have the power to influence narratives, and they can be altered just based on an image.” An anonymous student said that “I’m a Dana scholar and we are required to go to every Center for Ethics event. This is kind of a difficult task because I’m already really busy with homework and other obligations, so it can be difficult to make it to every event. I’m excited to learn more about the ethics of the image though.”

FROM PROCESS PAGE 5

a few times as a group before auditioning in smaller groups. Something I found really helpful was that the choreographers were open to answering any questions we had and were willing to repeat a phrase multiple times if someone asked (i.e. me). “My experiences as a dancer heavily influenced how I wanted to hold our audition. I really wanted to eliminate as much unnecessary stress from the audition as possible because I don’t think we dance our best when we’re too in our heads. So in collaboration with Dani Medvedovski ‘24 and Leanna Niesen ‘24, we choreographed a shorter combination with an emphasis on improvisation which allowed for more processing time for the dancers and more opportunities to watch the dancers as well,” Kaufman said. Performing in small groups for the choreographers can be scary. You’re usually numbered so depending on your number, you can be in the first group

to perform or the last. I was in the first group for every audition slot, which was anxiety-inducing because that left little time to go over the combination. But, my advice is to just go for it. If time permits, you usually do the combination twice in groups and then one last time with everyone as a whole. This can be really helpful because one time, I remember doing the combination and forgetting the entire dance, always a step behind. Another time, I skipped a move and was a step ahead of everyone else. At other times, I was killing it and doing everything exactly the way I wanted to. It’s really up to chance, and at the end of the day the key is to be kind to yourself. After auditions are over, rest. I know that’s what I did. Cast lists usually come out a few days after the auditions and so then it’s a waiting game.

To be an orientation leader

By SHINAM HUSSAIN
ARTS AND CULTURE EDITOR

I remember experiencing my freshman year orientation vividly. I was scared, anxious and tired. I went through the weekend with quiet anxiety. I remember confiding in my orientation leader (OL) about how nervous I was feeling, and was provided with comfort and support, and from there I knew I wanted to be an orientation leader. I knew I was not the only incoming student that was scared and nervous about their transition to college, and if I could provide the comfort and support I was given to others, I would.

Walking into a room of around 60 other orientation leaders I did not know at all for training, aside from familiar faces I had seen around Seegers Union, was overwhelming and nearly deterred me. But it was not knowing nearly anyone in that room that let me see the magic in the orientation program. I walked into it not knowing any of the other orientation leaders, and walked away from those ten days we spent together having met my current best friend and roommate and the people I now consider my closest friends that I share my deepest secrets with.

Going into orientation with the hopes of providing the incoming students with a sense of belonging and community at Muhlenberg, I never would have imagined that it would provide me with a sense of community I had not yet experienced at college. While some of my most gratifying and memorable moments being an orientation leader revolved around my group of students, the best memories I have from being an orientation leader come from just hanging out with the other OLs I didn't even know before that week, and bonding over our experiences with our students.

During orientation training, there is a fair amount of team bonding that takes place, and whether it was introducing the concept of a friend crush, going up to someone that you didn't really know to give them a compliment, or writing people notes whenever you felt inspired by them, there was a community made among the orientation leaders that was derived based on kindness, compassion and inspiration.

Much of the bonding took place during actual orientation weekend, where OLs provided each other with the support we all were unaware we would even need. When I was having a rough time, or someone was having difficulty feeling like they were doing a good job, there was another orientation leader at every corner to let us know that we are never alone, and we have numerous shoulders to lean on.

As someone who is more introverted and a quieter presence in large spaces, it is easy to feel as though I go

unnoticed. Tack on having a name that many people find difficult to pronounce, and it can feel impossible to walk into a room thinking you're going to make friends, and much less, an impact.

This did not hold true to being in a room filled with orientation leaders. I had walked away from that experience with a phenomenon I was not familiar with in my life: people knew my name, and how to pronounce it - correctly. To anyone else, this seems like a small feat, but to me, it made me feel like I genuinely belonged in the space I was taking up—A feeling previously foreign to me for the majority of my life.

The experience the orientation program can provide orientation leaders is transformative. Not only does it provide students with an outlet and opportunity to help and aid incoming students in a smooth college transition, but it also provides orientation leaders and existing students with community, bonds and friendships that they would not have otherwise experienced, all while undergoing personal growth as leaders with the help of people they did not know ten days prior. It is an experience that has been described as life changing, magical and empowering. And it is an experience that I could not have been more grateful to have.

I am not the only orientation leader who feels grateful for their experience, Maya Brooks '24 said, "The most rewarding part of orientation for me by far is the connections I make with the other OLs. As much as I like helping the first-years, the bonds that I make with other OLs during our week of training have been some of the most long lasting relationships I've had in college."

"OLs keep coming back despite the lack of pay because it is such a rewarding position. I genuinely think I would pay to be an orientation leader if it came to it because it is my favorite thing at this school. From the friendships to the leadership experience to the confidence all OLs walk away from the program with, it is no mystery to me why people keep coming back," she continued.

Brooks went on to express, "Orientation means so much to me. I believe it is one of the only organizations on campus where the qualifying factor to be part of this program is being a kind, patient person who wants to give back. Because of that, every year I leave orientation with new friends that remain in my life after it ends."

Dylan De Magistris '24, who was an orientation leader and then an orientation team leader for two years stated, "I wanted to become an orientation leader to give back an experience to the incoming first years that I never received when I was a freshman because of COVID."

"The most rewarding part is



The Yellow Orientation team blows bubbles for a photo. Photo credit to Mayu Lee '24.

seeing everyone find their sense of belonging in our community and gain the self confidence to put themselves out there. As much as it would be nice for OLs to get paid, that's not the reason we do what we do. OLs continually come back to the program because we are positively influencing the lives of others. This includes the first-years, the other OLs and ourselves. Orientation provides us an experience to be self reflective to become the best version of ourselves. Being in a group of likeminded people striving towards the same goal is a powerful and fun experience."

"Orientation means so much to me as it has really shaped my college experience. Many of my closest friends and faculty relationships I have met through orientation. As for being an OL, it means being compassionate and flexible," he continued.

Nicole Tahmoosh '24, who was an orientation leader for two years and an orientation team leader this past year shared, "The most rewarding part of orientation for me is the growth it encourages for me as an individual and the growth it encourages on a community level. Orientation has pushed me out of my comfort zone over and over again and through that I have become a more compassionate leader, friend, and member of the Muhlenberg community. Seeing how the growth of orientation leaders including myself broadens the impact they have on first-year students is endlessly rewarding and continues to make change on Muhlenberg's campus.

"Being an orientation leader is my favorite thing that I've done during my time at Muhlenberg. From starting as a scared and shy orientation leader sophomore year to ending as an orientation team leader my senior year- the orientation program has shaped me into the leader and person I am today. The friendships and experiences I have gained through orientation are ones that I will carry with me for the rest of my life. I am so thankful for a program that encourages so

much love, growth and inclusion and in turn that has helped me find myself," continued Tahmoosh.

Anna Hanley '25, who has been an orientation leader for two years, said, "One of the most special parts of orientation is the relationships that form between all the OLs. Don't get me wrong, I love actual orientation weekend and meeting my group, but orientation would not be what it is without the people. I walked into my first day of training last year terrified because I had no idea who anyone was and I was so scared that I was not going to talk to anybody. I cannot stress how wrong I was. Every year, orientation is made up of the most caring, thoughtful and open students on campus. I went in barely talking and was scared to then leave with 60+ people that I considered to be friends with. These strangers turned into my biggest supporters, role

models, friends and I even met my roommate."

"It means, to not put it lightly, my entire college experience. I really am not the same person I was before I became an orientation leader. It gave me a space to feel like I belonged on campus. It also gave me the confidence to apply and take on other roles on campus. Being an Orientation Leader, to be completely honest, changed my life at Muhlenberg."



By CAYLA MILLS
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

I feel complete,
With the moon
And the sun
I *am* complete.

Even without you,
I am complete.

Even without your love
That was never mine, I
am complete.

Even without the longing
That never existed
From you...
I am complete.



The Enchanted Garden - "The Roses of Heliogabalus" (1888) painted by Lawrence Alma-Tadema, Public Domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

A teenager spills their GUTS

By Emily Nally
Contributing Writer

Why go to therapy when we now have the album “GUTS” by Olivia Rodrigo? Released on Sept. 8, Olivia Rodrigo has created yet another riveting album for teenage girls all over the world to consume. She commands her listeners with strong ballads, such as “making the bed” and “the grudge,” but she also hones in on her grunge side with songs like, “get him back!” or “bad idea right?” While a different vibe from her first album, “SOUR,” Rodrigo perfectly embodies all of the emotions you feel when spilling your guts. It would be easy for me to convince most teenage girls to give this album a listen, and I’m sure Rodrigo knows this is her prime audience, but personally, I think everyone should take a listen to “GUTS,” because these songs are made for the emotional teenager inside all of us.

Have you ever gotten back with an ex when you know you shouldn’t have? I know you have! Well, take a listen to “bad idea right?,” as it takes you through the journey of actively going against your friends’ advice and seeing the one person that is very much not worth it— as Rodrigo says, “I’m sure I’ve seen much hotter

men/But I really can’t remember when.” It’s a great song to scream at the top of your lungs, trust me. A good follow-up to that song would be “get him back!,” which perfectly depicts that feeling of wanting “sweet revenge,” as Rodrigo puts it, but also still feeling guilty for wanting to go back to them, “I wanna break his heart,/ stitch it right back up, I wanna kiss his face with an uppercut,/ I wanna meet his mom and tell her her son sucks.” We always think we can fix them, but let’s be honest, we really can’t.

If you’re still feeling like these more grunge, F-you songs are your vibe, then let me introduce you to: “all-american bitch,” “ballad of a homeschooled girl” and “love is embarrassing,” each of which preach powerful messages through punk instrumentals and vocals. “all-american bitch” cycles through the concept of needing to balance your personality in order to not be ridiculed by the public. As Rodrigo sings, “I’m grateful all the time/I’m sexy and I’m kind/I’m pretty when I cry.” She perfectly captures the feeling of how women feel the pressure to act within the male gaze in order to be accepted. “Ballad of a homeschooled girl” has a similar mood, in which Rodrigo feels like each time she steps out into the social realm, she embarrasses herself.

Her witty lines add to the angst, such as “thought your mom was your wife/called you the wrong name twice/can’t think of a third line.” Yes, so relatable Olivia. “love is embarrassing” is very much what it sounds like. Bitterly, but in a good way, Rodrigo reflects on all the stupid things she’s done for someone who was not worth an ounce of her time, saying, “You found a new version of me/and I damn near started World War III/Jesus, what was I even doin?” Real.

Now let’s say you’re into a more slow song type of vibe, well don’t worry, she’s got something for you too. Take a listen to “making the bed” or “the grudge” if you want to absolutely destroy yourself! “Making the bed” paints the idea of self sabotage and knowing that while you may be the victim in your mind, you are the one who got yourself into this situation and now you must deal with it. Thanks for the reality check, Olivia! But that’s not all; in “the grudge,” we have lyrics such as, “and I hear your voice every time that I think I’m not enough” and “It takes strength to forgive, but I don’t feel strong.” The song describes the trauma from someone who made you feel so little and insignificant that each new relationship is haunted by them. Super awesome!!

Of course, there are a few songs that have a more melancholy vibe to them, such as “pretty isn’t pretty,” “lacy,” “vampire” and “logical.” Most have heard “vampire” by now, a song taking you through the idea of someone draining you and taking advantage of you, though “lacy,” which follows “vampire,” depicts being so jealous of someone that you literally obsess over each thing they do— “i despise my rotten mind and how much it worships you.” This is something everyone has been guilty of, let’s be honest. “logical,” on the other hand, focuses more on how sometimes you can never make the person you’re with happy, with a personal favorite line that goes “said I was too young, I was too soft/can’t take a joke, can’t get you off.” Finally, “pretty isn’t pretty” goes off on the idea that no matter what you do, whether it be starving yourself, layering makeup on your face or hiding in your clothes, you will never feel pretty enough for today’s societal standards. Super great.

The final song on the album, “teenage dream,” sounds like it would be a hopeful ending to this heartbreaking album. No! Completely soul-crushing, Olivia Rodrigo sings “When am I gonna stop being great for my age and just start being good?” and also, “Yeah, they all say that



Olivia Rodrigo promoting her new album Guts
photo courtesy of @oliviadrodrigo on Instagram

it gets better/it gets better, but what if I don’t?” Very different from her last song on “SOUR,” which ends on a more optimistic note, this song leaves the listener questioning the past 39 minutes. Though in many ways, that captures the whole concept of the album— not knowing the future and only knowing that right in this moment you are hurting. The pain you can feel simply by being a teenage girl, or just a teenager in general, is overlooked and considered “a phase,” but is in many ways one of the most difficult times of life, and even if it is over some ex, why does that make it any less valid? It doesn’t. “GUTS” tells us that it’s okay to feel all of these feelings, no matter how ridiculous they may sound in your mind. Take it from me, a real life teenage girl: this is the greatest lesson you can learn.

Muhlenberg College

Hillel | The Leffell Center for Jewish Student Life

HIGH HOLIDAY INFORMATION

2023 - 5784

Celebrate the High Holidays with Muhlenberg Hillel

HILLEL ON CAMPUS

Leffell Center for Jewish Student Life - 2238 W. Chew St.

Rosh HaShanah

September 15th - 6:30 pm Dinner, followed by Evening Services

September 16th - 2:00 pm Rosh Hashanah in 60 Minutes

September 17th - 2:00 pm Rosh Hashanah in 60 Minutes and Tashlich (meet at Leffell Center)

Yom Kippur

September 24th - 4:30 pm Conclusion of Pre-Fast Meal (Noshery closes at 5pm)

- 6:30 pm Kol Nidrei Services
- 9:00 pm Yom Kippur Across Berg (YKAB)

September 25th - 2:00 pm Yom Kippur in 60 Minutes

- 4:00 pm Jonah Learning and Discussion
- 4:45 pm Yizkor Service, Mincha Afternoon Service
- 6:30 pm Neila Service
- 7:45 pm Break Fast Meal

Tiny horoscopes for a tiny campus

MICRO-ASTROLOGY

Weekly advice and predictions

Aquarius (January 20 – February 18)

Try listening to telenovela background music to underscore your day. It’ll match the level of drama you’ve got going on in your internal monologue.

Pisces (February 19 – March 20)

Consider investing in some sunglasses to wear in public if you want everyone around you to stop knowing exactly what you’re thinking at all times.

Aries (March 21 – April 19)

Changing your mind just because all your friends share a different opinion isn’t always a good idea—but sometimes it is.

Taurus (April 20 – May 20)

Are you sure about that? Like if you really think about it?

Gemini (May 21 – June 20)

It’s hard to be misunderstood, but not as hard as when people understand you perfectly.

Cancer (June 21 – July 22)

Honestly, punching a wall might be an improvement on your current coping mechanisms. Just don’t do it in Moyer—Moyer hits back.

Leo (July 23 – August 22)

You feel the urge to throw a full-blown temper tantrum at every minor inconvenience. Try and

keep it to one or two a day.

Virgo (August 23 – September 22)

This week you’re wondering if everyone is stupid or you’re just grumpy. People are stupid—this time.

Libra (September 23 – October 22)

Stop gatekeeping your birthday. It just motivates people to internet stalk you until they find it out themselves.

Scorpio (October 23 – November 21)

You’ve gone so far into irony that you reached sincerity again; then kept going, did a little loop-de-loop, and are back into irony. Nobody else can follow those acrobatics, but as long as you know where you are keep doing your thing.

Sagittarius (November 22 – December 21)

Just keep being your sag-tacular self.

Capricorn (December 22 – January 19)

You don’t have to accept the truth, sometimes begrudgingly acknowledging its existence is good enough.

Cross country gets head start on season

Cross country team takes on Division I competition at Lehigh Invitational.

By CAITLIN KINNEAR
STAFF WRITER

On Friday, Sept. 1, the Muhlenberg cross country team kicked off their season with a successful first race at Lehigh University. After gearing up for the start of the season all summer and working hard during preseason, the team took on the challenge of competing against mostly Division I schools to begin the year. Going against renowned teams such as The University of Pennsylvania and West Virginia University required the team to stay positive and use the competition as motivation.

Lauren House '25, junior captain, had a positive outlook on the rivalry, "Competing against [Division I] schools is definitely a great opportunity because it gives you the chance to push yourself and be more competitive than usual. It's also nice to race against such competitive schools early on so that we're more ready for that type of competition when we get to the Conference and Regional meet," House commented.

This kind of mindset paid off for Muhlenberg, as six of the seven upperclassmen who raced improved their times from



Cross Country runners pose for a photo.

previous years. Additionally, most of the team's top finishers were some of the youngest on the team. These runners consist of first-year Maggie Holderith '27 and Ava Lundy '27, who placed second and third, respectively, for the Muhlenberg women. The top-place athletes from the team also include freshmen Sebastian Montalvo '27 and David Seel '27, who led the Muhlenberg men in first and second place. Montalvo, furthermore, ran the fastest 6K at Lehigh from a Muhlenberg first-year in the past eight years, coming in at an impressive 19:53.

After such strong performances at Lehigh, the Mules are looking up as they prepare to race at Haverford College this Friday, Sept. 15. Reflecting on the last meet, House stated, "we have a really positive outlook on the season. Now that we have one race done, we know what we need to keep working on as a team as well as individually." Moving forward, the team is ready to continue to trust their training, keep their mindsets strong and improve next week.

PHOTO BY JEM BERNEY '26



Lydia Jenkins-Ford '26 running to the finish line.

Buttermaker tournament

Muhlenberg volleyball posts three victories in historic Buttermaker

By ELISABETH LOISELLE
ROOKIE WRITER

Muhlenberg College hosted the Buttermaker Tournament this past weekend at Memorial Hall, where the Muhlenberg volleyball team went 3-1 over the four-game span. Their victories over Bard, Bluffton and Lebanon Valley allowed the Mules to improve their overall season record to 5-2. The team only suffered one loss in the tournament in their final game against Eastern.

Despite going in with a winning record, the Mules did not underestimate any of their competition entering the tournament. "This past weekend was a really fun tournament for our team, having so many good, competitive teams to play against so early in the season. We came into the weekend with really high expectations, and I think we played just as well as we had hoped. We only lost one out of our four games to a team that

had some really good talent that only made playing them that much more fun," said Captain Rachel Jacobs '25.

The Mules' victories this weekend were not produced by sheer luck. The team has elevated their standards, challenging themselves at practice every day, producing a collective effort on the court and results that speak for themselves. "Our team as a whole has been emphasizing the standards that we set last season by making conference playoffs. We have been working at our practices the past couple of weeks at playing aggressively and showing the power that we are capable of," explained Jacobs.

Head Coach Rob McVicker echoes these thoughts, saying, "We have been preparing hard for our contests with a lot of focus on continuing to gel as a team at the beginning of the season. We saw a lot of great things this weekend and we think that correlates directly with the work

the team has put in so far." The team's efforts and focus were so profound that the Mules recorded their biggest win since 2015 against Bluffton, with a score of 25-6.

The Mules' efforts were also made possible by the chemistry the team has fostered during the preseason and continues to emulate. "Our team has gotten very close very fast, starting as soon as we kicked off [the] preseason," said Jacobs. The team's ability to capitalize on this chemistry has allowed them to capitalize on each other's individual strengths producing a stronger team unit on the court. This has given players more confidence and the ability to persevere, ultimately translating into sweeping victories. "Our team chemistry is really solid. We have a great group this year. I think each of us is strong individually, but together we are even stronger. We had a really good weekend and definitely showed mental toughness, especially in our 5-set win against Lebanon Valley," said



The women's volleyball faces Eastern on Saturday. Photo by Kira Bretsky '27.

Captain Esmae Oehler '25.

Now, the team is focused on continuing to improve and implement all individual and team learning experiences from this past weekend into future practices. "Our players have worked very hard to identify things they want to get better at and actively work on them during practice. We will continue to look back on what we can improve on from previous games and how to prepare for upcoming matches,"

said McVicker.

Oehler shares this excitement to move forward and continue to play. "I'm really happy and excited to see what else we can do this season."

Keeping it in the family

PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR MADDIE CILIENTO '25

BY OLIVIA OBERMAN
SPORTS EDITOR

What does it mean to be an athlete at Muhlenberg? Alumni have answered this with their actions.

Over this past weekend, Sept. 8-10, Muhlenberg alumni traveled from all over to seek the nostalgic feelings only felt when walking through those red doors and to spark meaningful conversations with older but familiar faces. This is the weekend where “Go Mules!” easily replaces “Hello” and cardinal is the proud color of every shirt and hat.

Several alumni attended athletics events over the weekend, many who were once Muhlenberg student-athletes. While reminiscing on their years spent wearing Muhlenberg jerseys, a handful of alumni were asked to share their favorite memories during their time as student-athletes and how those experiences shaped them later on. A bit of research into the Muhlenberg archives brings life to the alumni remarks.

One of three captains of the 1973 men’s soccer team and philanthropic supporter of the college, John Scally Jr. ‘73, was a part of the very first team in Muhlenberg history to make the NCAA tournament in 1972. “[In 1973] we beat Philadelphia Textile who was #3 in the country,” explained Scally. “At home, in overtime, we had two freshmen on the team – one of them scored the tie goal and the other the winning goal.” Scally took his experiences from Muhlenberg and went on to earn his J.D. from Catholic University in 1976. “The experience was amazing, it was a very tight team,” adds Jeff Rank ‘73, a Muhlenberg Weekly writer and student athletic trainer for the 1973 men’s soccer team.

Current Head Men’s Soccer Coach, Sean Topping ‘98 shares his unique perspective as both a player and coach on the same pitch nearly 25 years later. The co-captain of the 1997 Muhlenberg Centennial Conference championship team stated, “First and foremost, my teammates and being a men’s soccer player here at Muhlenberg were my world, so much so that I decided to go down the path of being a college soccer coach.” An obvious testament to the passion Topping carries into his career everyday is further evident in his 200+ career wins, five NCAA tournament bids and four Centennial Conference Championships, the most recent one being last year. “I feel that athletes, especially as tight knit as Muhlenberg teams are, have a huge advantage when transitioning to college as they are part of a big team family and athletic community right away. I took great pride whenever I stepped on the field knowing I



Alumni fondly gaze at the football field. was representing Muhlenberg and it’s my hope that I instill that in the teams I coach.” Coach Topping has definitely found a way to instill that same pride in his players.

High scorer of both the 1973 Muhlenberg varsity field hockey and women’s club lacrosse teams, Barbara Gunning ‘73, described her time as a female student-athlete simply, “We did it for the love of it.” Gunning and the other female athletes that composed the women’s club lacrosse team in 1973 did not know they were paving the way for the 1984 birth of Muhlenberg varsity women’s lacrosse program. Aside from athletics, Gunning could’ve been found in any corner of the school: president of the ski club, vice president of student council, treasurer of the pre-law society and winner of the Citizens Change Corps award. “I learned many teamwork skills while being a student-athlete at Muhlenberg, which helped me in my career as a judge,” said Gunning, who served as the Environmental Protection Agency’s senior administrative law judge. Gunning went on to receive the 2020 Muhlenberg Evening of Distinction Alumni Achievement Award.

Kenneth Wonderland ‘77 and Sam Stovall ‘77, co-captains of the 1977 track team, were dually present this weekend, commemorating their old stomping grounds together again. Wonderland, who failed to mention he was also senior class president, participated in shot, discus and javelin. “Track was a low key sport, Coach Flamish was excellent and never raised his voice,” said Wonderland. “The bus rides were the best. We always stopped at this one diner as a team after games in Lancaster. Our weight room was a bench and maybe 3 bars, I can only imagine what our

athletes would’ve accomplished now. After Muhlenberg, I found myself on all sorts of teams. What you put in is what you get out.”

2013 Muhlenberg Hall of Fame Inductee Harold “Sam” Stovall ‘77 captained both the football, and track and field programs during his senior year. He earned a total of eight varsity letters in the two sports. In addition to serving on the Muhlenberg College Board of Trustees and Board of Observers amongst other committees on campus, Stovall donated the goal posts that sit on Frank Marino field with the plaque stating “to Coach and Carol Marino who made us feel like family.” Stovall expressed, “Being a Division III athlete here meant being a part of a family. It was important to note that we were a part of coach’s family. The family didn’t give up on you and they always found a way to make you improve. I left with the best memories.” Stovall notably went 29-for-29 on extra points in his senior football season, giving full credit to Coach Biedleman because “he gave me the confidence to do so.” His cleat from that 1977 season can be found in the Muhlenberg Hall of Fame. If Stovall’s professional career is any indication of his time at Muhlenberg, there was definitely something to be said about being part of the family. After Muhlenberg, Stovall went on to become the Chief Equity Strategist at Standard & Poor’s Capital IQ in 1989 and now the Chief Investment Strategist at CFRA. He speaks regularly in the financial media as both a published author and analyst.

The last name “Fahy” may sound familiar to Muhlenberg students who utilize the newest space on our campus. Gerald P. Fahy ‘79 and his wife Cathleen A. Fahy recently made the largest personal gift in Muhlenberg

history, giving way to the brand new Fahy Commons building as well as aiding in the future expansion plans of The J. Conrad and Hazel J. Seegers Union. During Fahy’s time as a student at Muhlenberg, he was a running back on the football team. His name is found in the Muhlenberg football record books for career rushing yards (1036) and game rushing yards (200) versus Johns Hopkins in 1977. “Playing football and banging heads creates character and it prepares you for the rest of your life,” said Gerald Fahy. “Coach Marino was instrumental in me coming to Muhlenberg. I believe that Muhlenberg and my time as a student athlete here prepared me in business.” After Muhlenberg, Fahy founded and owns Kenvil United Corp construction company after 42 years of business.

In the Feb. 16, 1979 issue of The Muhlenberg Weekly, Coach Frank Marino announced Jerry Galgano ‘80 as co-captain of the 1979 football team. The issue stated in the 1978 season, “Galgano anchored the defense [as a defensive end] and led the mules in tackles with 56 and sacks with five.” Galgano’s passion for representing Muhlenberg proudly did not end on the day of his graduation, nevertheless it grew when one of his daughter’s, Susan Galgano ‘14, attended Muhlenberg as a student-athlete on the women’s soccer team. Galgano’s philanthropic and volunteer efforts to support the College can be seen in each corner of the school. The President of Hilliard Farber and Company in New York, not only served on the Board of Trustees but played a prominent role in creating and publicizing Mule Madness as a source of fundraising for athletics and keeping alumni connected. Today, Mule Madness serves an integral role

in sustaining the competitive edge of our athletics programs. Standing alongside the fence at the football game this past Saturday, Galgano reminisced about his time playing under Coach Marino on the same field. “Coach Frank Marino always said, just remember you are representing the family, don’t embarrass the family. Playing football at Muhlenberg taught me teamwork and in our company we always try to hire people who played sports.”

Being a part of the Muhlenberg athletics family is obviously something very special. It is hopeful that someday Muhlenberg’s current athletes will support the College and athletics programs with equivalent passion.

So, what does it mean to be an athlete at Muhlenberg?

Galgano quotes late Coach Frank Marino, “You may not know the two people who sit next to you at graduation, but you will definitely know the two people you played next to.”



Muhlenberg faces Moravian in last weekend’s football game. Photo courtesy of Office of Athletics, Mike Falk.

‘Berg earns #25 national ranking

New semester. New ranking. Same great team.

By LUCY ATWOOD
ROOKIE WRITER

The Muhlenberg football team kicked off their 2023 season with a bang. Muhlenberg’s first game was against their crosstown rival, Moravian University. Friday, Sept. 1, was the Mules’ home opener at Scotty Wood Stadium, a game in which they battled hard and came away with a 52-12 victory, keeping the Sodexo Cup trophy in Allentown.

The Mules are standing strong, defending their home ground with two back-to-back wins against Moravian and Salisbury. On Sept. 9, the Mules defeated Salisbury University 29-17. Salisbury was a nationally ranked team, placing number 25 in the country for 2023 before Saturday. The team was already fired up from their first victory of the year and brought high energy and intensity going into the game against Salisbury. The

Mules battled hard and came out with a well-earned win against Salisbury and a new #25 national ranking.

Captain and left tackle Zachary Greenberg ‘24 leads by example on and off the field, helping prepare his team for victory. “Going into week one, we prepared with the same mentality we do every week, outwork our opponents with our work ethic and finish the week 1-0. The team executed at a very high level, immediately building on the areas we lacked from the previous year. Our execution included all three phases (offense, defense and special teams) operating complementary.”

Matt McKenna ‘24, senior tight end, received three touchdown passes from Quarterback Joe Repetti ‘25, leading the Mules to further victory. McKenna tied the school record for touchdown receptions as a tight end in one game. Fifth-year Tight End James Nye ‘24 received the

first two touchdown passes of the game against Moravian, surpassing his third career 100-yard game. McKenna and Nye both received the Bianco Award and game MVP. McKenna shared his win with the team, “Receiving the Bianco Award with [Nye] was a great achievement, but we couldn’t have gotten it without the rest of our offense. Joe Repetti had a stellar performance as QB, where he allowed me and [Nye] to make the plays we did. Everyone on our offense, from O-line to our receivers to our running backs, played incredibly, as we all had great performances, allowing us to obtain our first W.”

The currently undefeated Mules have been pushing themselves, putting in the time and effort to do whatever it takes to win their way to the top. McKenna explained, “Our team has been working extremely hard since the end of last season. It’s thrilling to see all our hard work be put on display and for us to

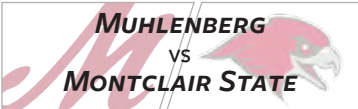



get our first win and to start the season off in a great way.” The Mules are just getting started and are excited about what the future entails. Repetti had two outstanding performances, surpassing 3,000 career passing yards in the game against Moravian. “It felt nice to throw five touchdown passes, knowing it would help my team get closer to winning that football game. Any time the offense can score five touchdowns means that receivers are getting open, the offensive line is blocking and our defense can feel more comfortable with a safe lead,” said Repetti. He has been playing selflessly, consistently helping his teammates score and improve.

Greenberg stated, “We are constantly working to build upon our previous successes and not let them linger mentally for too long. The success from week one is just a preview of what we can do this season. Our mentality is ‘one week at a time’ and working

towards re-attacking our weekly goal of going 1-0. We are thrilled with how we performed in week one and [are] excited to see how we are able to build on our success on a weekly basis.”

Repetti commented, “I think the season will be a step up from a disappointing 2022 season. We return a lot of guys on both sides of the ball, had a great camp in August and we will hopefully find ourselves atop the Centennial Conference at the end of the season once again.” Greenberg, Repetti and the team are both fired up and ready to compete for the Centennial Conference championship, setting the team standard for what it takes to win. The Mules show up daily, ready to compete, work hard and improve their game for future victories continuing into the 2023 season.

Coming up this week in
SPORTS
Sept. 14 - Sept. 20

Field Hockey	Women’s Tennis	Men’s Soccer	Field Hockey
			
Fri, Sept. 15 @ 5:00 p.m. Scotty Wood Stadium	Tues, Sept. 19 @ 4:00 p.m. Kern Field Courts	Wed, Sept. 20 @ 7:00 p.m. Dallas, Pa.	Wed, Sept. 20 @ 7:00 p.m. Scotty Wood Stadium

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NEWS
Ettinger remodeled.
read more on page 3



ARTS & CULTURE
New indie bookstore
opens near ‘Berg.
read more on page 6



OP/ED
Katherine Conlon ‘24
shares her top 10 cover
songs.
read more on page 9



SPORTS
‘Berg soccer plays
doubleheader in
Baltimore.
read more on page 11



LARAMIE PREMIERS AT CIVIC
SEE PAGE 5
PHOTO COURTESY OF BILL BASTA

New interfaith club coming to Muhlenberg

By SAMANTHA BROOKS
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Bridges is a new interfaith club at Muhlenberg that was created to help engage the campus community in the learning and celebration of each other’s beliefs. Run by Or-El Ankori ‘25, Joseph Wolf ‘25 and club advisors Reverend Janelle Neubauer of the Chapel and Hillel Springboard Fellow Olivia Rosenblum, the club aims to “bridge” people of all different religious and spiritual backgrounds in dynamic conversation about their similarities and differences.

Bridges started in the fall of 2022 after Ankori, president of Bridges, and two other students of other religious backgrounds, Aidan White ‘25 and Nour Yousry ‘23, had the opportunity to accompany Chaplain Janelle Neubauer to the Interfaith America Conference hosted in Chicago during August 2022. As representatives of various religious organizations on campus, they were invited to partake in a weekend that emphasized collaboration. During the conference, they were introduced to the potluck metaphor: America is a potluck rather than a melting pot, and every guest brings the best “dish” from their culture or background. The dishes are each special on their own, but also work together to create a spectacular meal (community in this metaphor). This metaphor has stayed with them and has shaped the way that Bridges approaches interfaith on campus.

Wolf, the treasurer of Bridges, explains that he came together with both students and faculty to create this club, as he feels that people can be brought together through it. He expresses that “Despite the fact that people may have different faiths, everyone believes in something and when you get off campus, you see how politicized the world is. The way to prevent this is to gain multiple perspectives, express our own opinions and beliefs and have an appreciation for other peoples’ feelings even though we may not agree with them. The core [goal] of Bridges is to be a place where we can have [a variety of] viewpoints.”

If you are interested in discussing and learning about different religions, perspectives and cultures Bridges may be the group for you. As the club enters its first full year on campus, they are looking to offer a wide range of activities, including discussions, text studies, walks, stargazing and even some craft activities. Bridges is dedicated to providing students with a safe space in which they can share their experiences and learn from others about the various faiths celebrated by the student body.

Ankori emphasizes that “The Interfaith America Conference made a point to use extremely inclusive language when it comes to personal belief. While many religions on campus have their own space, we also recognize that people can be of different backgrounds, faiths and worldviews, and can range from religious to spiritual or from both to neither. We hope to bond over shared values and the experience of religion and faith.



PHOTO COURTESY OF OR-EL ANKORI ‘25

(l to r) Aidan White ‘25, Nour Yousry ‘23, Or-El Ankori ‘25

In the past, we have done value-based discussions, interfaith text studies and have partnered with Hillel to bring interfaith comedy group ‘Comedy for Peace’ to campus. We hope to do a lot more with other religious organizations and visit their spaces to learn more about their beliefs and customs.”

Rosenblum says that “Bridges is open to everyone. When we enter spaces that engage with religion and spirituality, there are a lot of feelings that can arise as there is so much packed into these topics. However, it is so important to engage and learn from one another and Bridges encourages curiosity and vulnerability. Additionally, no one is expected to know everything about all religious groups and identities, all you

need to know and all you represent is yourself and your journey. This is a low stakes experience and you might end up meeting your new best friend here. Since Bridges is still so new, by joining you can help shape what the experience looks like for future members.”

While there is no interest meeting for students to attend at this juncture, those on campus should check out Bridges at Hillel’s Yom Kippur Across ‘Berg event on Sunday, Sept. 24. For all students who are interested in learning more information about Bridges or joining the club, follow @bridgesatberg on Instagram.

THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY

Serving the Muhlenberg College Community since 1883

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CAMPUS SAFETY NOTES

- 9/10/23
Suspicious Activity—Report of unknown noises at the Keck House, area checked and nothing could be noted.
- 9/11/23
Theft—Report of theft of shirt in Prosser, item later returned to owner.
- 9/12/23
Sick Student—Report of sick student in Brown Hall, MC EMS responded, student transported to hospital by Campus Safety.
- Sick Student—Report of sick student in the LSC, MC EMS responded, student transported to hospital by Campus Safety.
- Sick Student—Report of sick student in Moyer Hall, MC EMS responded, student transported to hospital by a friend.
- 9/13/23
Injured Student—Report of injured student on Chew Street, MC EMS responded, student refused further treatment or transport.
- 9/15/23
Injured Student—Report of injured student in Brown Hall, MC EMS responded, student refused further treatment or transport.
- 9/16/23
Disorderly Conduct—Report of possible exposure incident on campus, reporting party spoken to, investigation to continue.
- 9/17/23
Sick Student—Report of alcohol violation, MC EMS responded, Allentown EMS responded and transported student to hospital.
- Sick Student—Report of sick student in Parents Plaza, MC EMS responded, Allentown EMS responded and transported student to hospital.

FALL HARVEST BBQ

September 26

11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

PARENTS PLAZA

dining dollars, berg bucks,

cash & credit

will be accepted





Ettinger classroom revamp

By MATTHEW KLINGER
News Editor

Students walking by the first floor of Ettinger have probably noticed that classroom 105 looks markedly different from the spring semester. With new screens, brighter lighting and updated tables, the remodel provides a jolt of modernity in an otherwise historic academic building. According to Assistant Professor of Economics Lindsey Nagy, Ph.D., the Muhlenberg Accounting, Business, Economics and Finance (ABEF) department had been planning on transforming Ettinger 105 into a finance lab for many years, but the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus delayed the planning and implementation of those ideas.

Nagy explained that creating a vision for the space was “a collaborative effort between faculty, mainly those in the ABEF Department and other campus offices to create a learning environment that would allow students to be immersed in financial data and market conditions.”



PHOTO BY KATHERINE CONLON '24.

The New Ettinger Finance Center.

To help achieve that vision, Nagy elaborated that the remodel equipped the room “with monitors that can display real time market data which allow faculty to easily integrate current conditions into discussions and lectures. There will also be a financial ticker installed before the start of the spring semester.

Additional software and data licenses are also being acquired that will provide students with the experience of managing a portfolio and utilizing the metrics Wall Street investors use in assessing market conditions and performing predictive forecasting.”

However, the changes go past

the classroom; there were additional TV monitors installed in the hallway. According to Nagy, those monitors “will highlight the research, internships and career outcomes of the ABEF students as well as the investing success of Muhlenberg’s Investment Society, [which] is a student club that manages an

investment portfolio of close to \$1 million.”

While the primary focus of the remodel was to enhance the Muhlenberg experience for ABEF students, the remodel was inclusive of all disciplines. Inside the classroom, computer moni-

SEE **ETTINGER** PAGE 7

Satellite sightings in ‘Berg skies



By ALEXANDRA DOWNEY
Contributing Writer

PHOTO BY ALEXANDRA DOWNEY '27

If you happened to glance up to appreciate the night sky at 8:00 p.m. on Saturday night, you may have witnessed a strange line of glowing lights steadily becoming bigger before suddenly disappearing into nothing. At first glance, the lights looked like one of the countless planes that fly over campus, but this string of lights made no audible noise and was considerably larger than the average wingspan. The explanation is simple: the lights were actually Starlink satellites launched from Florida on Friday night as a part of Elon Musk’s SpaceX program. With the U.S. government recently confirming extraterrestrial activity, the potential of space seems to be on everyone’s minds. One anonymous student who saw the satellites remarked, “A bit disappointed it wasn’t aliens, but still very cool and definitely unexpected.”

“It was definitely unsettling at first because we had no clue what they were,” another anonymous witness shared. “It was kind of rude of Elon to interrupt our stargazing, but the way they just appeared and faded over campus without warning was cool in its own right.”

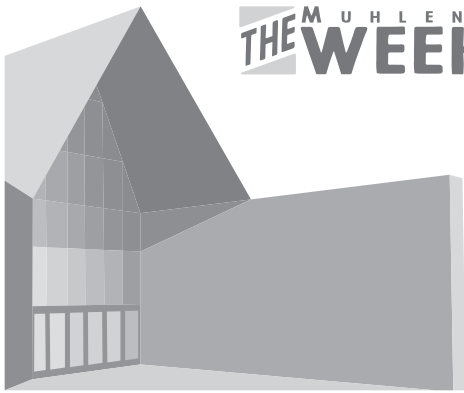
The official mission of the Starlink satellites is to provide low-cost internet for remote areas, with an ultimate goal of having 40,000 active satellites in orbit. As of now, there are around 4,000 that are active, and after Friday’s launch (which took place after a day’s delay), 22 more satellites have been added to the operational fleet. The appearance of the satellites is so noteworthy due to the fact that after launch, Starlinks are only visible for about a day before they disperse and blend in with the night sky. This process of dispersion sees the satellites seemingly vanish into thin air, glowing one second and fading into darkness moments later.

The Starlink satellites aren’t just a display of cool aerospace technology, however. Ukraine’s connection to the online world relies on Starlink and its fleet of satellites. In fact, the U.S. Department of Defense has a contract with Starlink for the purposes of satellite communications to support Ukraine. Because of this, many have pointed out Musk’s personal beliefs on the war—namely that Ukraine

and Russia should sign a peace treaty—may have an impact on Ukraine’s usage of the program. The murky nature of Musk’s personal involvement in Starlink creates questions surrounding the exact conditions of the contract signed between SpaceX and the U.S. Department of Defense, which Mohsin Hashim, Ph.D., professor of political science, says remain unanswered. “So the debate right now,” Hashim explained, “from what I understand, is that if this is such a big part of Ukraine’s ability to counter Russia’s offensive, a private person headed by such a big ego like Elon Musk—does it compromise U.S. national security interests?”

This exact matter is currently under investigation in Congress, though the facts remain unclear. Starlink operates as a link between loved ones for Ukrainian soldiers and government officials, and also is the system under which the military can launch offensive and defensive operations. Last year in September, Musk refused to turn service on for the Ukrainian military under the request of sending out a counter-strike after a Russian attack, stating that SpaceX would not be complicit in an act that would escalate the war.

While these satellites clearly play a part on the international stage, for Muhlenberg’s campus, it was an eye-opening experience to the sky above us and the capabilities of the technology that inhabit it. “It puts things in perspective,” Alaina Hall ‘27 shared. She learned about the satellite sightings from a friend, and the subsequent political context of their usage. “I wasn’t on campus Saturday, so I’m disappointed that I missed it. It’s so interesting to see how something like a cool thing in the sky can turn out to be something that is literally helping in a war.”

THE MUHLENBERG
WEEKLY

ARTS & CULTURE

“For me, the only things of interest are those linked to the heart.”
- Audrey Hepburn

Powerful and haunting

A review of “The Laramie Project” at Civic Theatre

By SARAH WEDEKING
LAYOUT EDITOR

When you enter the theater, the first thing you hear is the wind whistling. It is the wind of Laramie, Wyoming, the last thing university student Matthew Sheppard heard as he lay dying, beaten and tied against a metal fence.

The play, “The Laramie Project” focuses on the town of Laramie and how they were affected by Sheppard’s death at the hands of a violent anti-gay hate crime. It is devised from interviews and statements from friends, family, witnesses and others. The play is currently playing at Civic Theatre in Allentown, running until this weekend.

At the beginning of the play, there is a dark stage with only a single candle lit. The ensemble walks together, dressed in black, onto the stage. The candle is then snuffed out. Immediately, you are thrown headfirst into the stories of “Laramie.”

At first, I thought the play’s pacing was too fast. There were times when I couldn’t remember who said what, but I realized it didn’t matter. The tragedy, the love, and regrettably, the hatred that prompted this event is what did matter.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BILL BASTA

The ensemble of “The Laramie Project.”

The play is emotional from the start, but I was sobbing towards the end of Act 2. Faces of the actors are often only lit by the yellow light of a candle, or a cold blue spotlight. The set is a collection of chairs that is moved around throughout the piece. In one instance, there is a jagged row of them that you can’t help but be disturbed by.

If there is one thing I have to commend (and trust me, I have many), it would be the ensemble. Their ability to capture a range of so many different characters and

so many different attitudes is astounding. They switched between different costumes, accents and body languages in the blink of an eye, and you couldn’t help but be impressed.

These days, we think of being queer as a celebration. And I’m proud to live in that time, especially as a queer person. But this play is a meaningful and stark reminder that not everyone is proud and wants to see our candles lit.

The play was written almost 23 years ago, but all I could think about as I left

the theater was how relevant this piece is now. Anti-LGBTQIA+ rhetoric is at the forefront of politics, and hate crimes still happen, despite the Matthew Sheppard anti-hate crime legislation taking effect in 2009.

But “The Laramie Project” also emphasizes the importance of community and love; interviews of grief, coming together as a community and more are some of the things I will remember the most. Matthew Sheppard will not be forgotten, and his tragedy is more than just personal, it is political.

The show follows several different themes: queerness, religion, grief, the justice system and so much more. There are moments of love, where the characters comfort and hold each other. There are moments when you smile and laugh. And there are other moments where you see nothing but pitch black, the actors uttering lines that strip you to your core as a human being.

Honestly, I’m still thinking of this production. It’s been a few days, but I am reminded of the whistling Laramie wind, the tears of Act Two, and of course, the yellow light of the candle. It is revealing that there is still some light, even in these dark days.

Artist spotlight: AnnaMaria Fernandez ‘24

By EMMA HOWSON
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

AnnaMaria Fernandez ‘24 is one of those people who’s busy from sun-up to sundown. But she wouldn’t have it any other way.

Fernandez has never known a life without art. “I have been drawing and crafting my whole life,” she said. “I began doing theatre in fifth grade... and I have been dancing since I was twelve.” When Fernandez came to Muhlenberg, the plan was to continue her lifelong pursuit of art. She was just going to study Theatre and Dance—“but then Soc[iology] 101 changed my life!” Fernandez will graduate with a double major in Theatre and Sociology and a minor in Dance.

But a double major and a minor were not enough to sate Fernandez’s academic and creative curiosity. She is involved in a host of extracurricular activities.

“I am President of Alpha Chi Omega... We are a fine arts women’s fraternity, which I feel like we don’t say a lot but that

holds a lot of value for me. I am also Public Relations/Social Chair for Students of Caribbean Ancestry (SOCA). I am a member of the Black Students Association (BSA) [and] Women of Color Collective and Emerging Leaders. I have also participated as a student facilitator for the Alliances for Justice and Student Leadership program.” She is very glad to have worked with all these organizations. “These activities have helped me become confident in my leadership abilities, which in turn have made me more confident in myself, which results in me being more confident in my art!”

And there’s more! In addition to all that, Fernandez has participated in many shows during her time at Muhlenberg.

“I was in the Marginalized Voices Theatre Arts Festival in ‘Look, A Latino!,’ Sistah Solidarity in ‘Magic’ in the Pneumonic Play Festival in 2021, ‘En el Tiempo de las Mariposas’ as American Woman, ‘In Motion’ 2022, ‘Reset,’ Earl Mosely’s

‘Unconquered 2022,’ [and] Zazzalil in ‘Firebringer.’

Turning to current projects, she said, “Now I will be playing Free Girl in ‘...And Jesus Moonwalks the Mississippi,’ choreographing for ‘Reset: New Dances’ 2023 and performing in ‘In Motion’ next semester.”

Fernandez’s college journey wasn’t always the easiest. She came to Muhlenberg during the height of the pandemic. Yet isolation was, in some ways, a blessing in disguise for her.

“COVID definitely made me find and try new avenues of creativity, since we were no longer connecting with each other physically. I also started graphic design during COVID and have found passion in that. I started writing more poetry, drawing and painting more, and I was even in a few Zoom shows!”

As mentioned above, Fernandez is currently in rehearsals for the departmental production of “...And Jesus Moonwalks the Mississippi,” where she is playing the role of

Free Girl. According to her, it’s been an engaging and exciting process since auditions.

“The audition process for ‘Jesus’ was really interesting because we had been given the sides in advance and told to read for whichever character we wanted to audition for. This was out of my comfort zone as I am used to just auditioning and receiving a callback for whomever the director feels I could be right for.” Despite her nerves, she eventually found this method of auditioning to be a welcome change of pace. “I really enjoyed this process because Christopher Burris [the director] offered me notes and [it] felt more like a workshop than a hierarchical stand and slate audition, which often causes me some anxiety.”

This role is something that has been on Fernandez’s sights for a while. “I had been working towards the role of Free Girl all summer, as I was involved in the season selection process in the spring semester... When the cast list came out I was ecstatic that I had been given the opportunity to make Free my own, and to have a part in telling this beautiful story.”

And that excitement was warranted; the rehearsals have been great, according to Fernandez. “The rehearsal process has been very eye-opening for me. Since we are

working with a guest director, we have a unique opportunity to see how someone from outside of the Muhlenberg community works. Even in our table reads, it has become evident that people are connecting not only to the story, but the words. Since the show is written in verse, language and sound are very important, and the rehearsal process has pushed me towards listening more rather than relying on visuals.”

Furthermore, she stated, “I hope people will see the story for what it is. I hope they let themselves feel the work deeply and I hope they walk away knowing that they have a choice: they can take away the setting of the play, or they can take away the stories of each of the individuals and connect it to their own thread that they sew into the quilt that is our world.”

You can see AnnaMaria Fernandez in “...And Jesus Moonwalks the Mississippi” on Oct. 26-29 in the Studio Theatre.

After graduation, she’s not quite sure what path she’ll be taking. But she knows it’ll involve art— “to whatever degree that may mean for me and the universe.” And she has some advice for aspiring artists: “Art is inherently political—how people view your art has nothing to do with you, and what you do with your art has everything to do with you.”

New, independently-owned bookstore opens near ‘Berg

By KATHERINE CONLON
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

On Apr. 29, The End: a bookstore opened up on Tilghman Street, just minutes away from Muhlenberg’s campus. The shop’s owner, Kirsten Hess, sat down with The Weekly to talk about her business’s origin, the importance of independent bookstores and her overall love of reading.

Back in 2013, Hess opened up her first bookstore, Let’s Play Books, in Emmaus. While Hess found success with her business, she couldn’t help but notice some difficulties arising. “Let’s Play Books has always had its challenges, and mostly because it’s a small footprint of a store. It’s out of the way for most people, and...the name of our store implies children. And that’s why we had to name the other store something else,” noted Hess.

Hess also discovered that most of her customers weren’t even in the Emmaus area. Hess explained this saying, “our data from COVID times showed us where our buyers were because we have all of the data from people who purchased online. And the zip codes are in Allentown, Whitehall and believe it or not Bethlehem.” Because of these reasons, Hess knew that she needed to open



The End: a bookstore is providing their literary services to the Lehigh Valley community

up a second location to better service her buyers.

The idea to add another location at the West End of Allentown spawned from an event hosted at many Muhlenberg students’ favorite coffee shop, Nowhere Coffee Co. Let’s Play Books was hosting author Chuck Wendig at the cafe; after the event, Hess noticed a “for rent” sign at a nearby vacant retail space, which eventually became the home of The End.

As an owner of an independent bookstore, Hess is up against

some giant competitors that sell books often for a lower price and can have them shipped directly to your door. Hess remarked on this saying that consumers need to purchase their titles from “an independent bookstore, or a Barnes & Noble, just in a bookstore. Not in Target, not at Costco, not at Amazon. Because those places don’t care what books get placed on the shelf, they put what the publisher sends that is the most popular, and what’s going to sell the most the fastest.”

PHOTO BY ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY ‘27.

and expose them to something unique and different.”

Hess expressed her business’ emphasis on inclusion and making sure everyone who enters the store feels accepted. “Our job is just to have a little bit for everyone so that everybody feels like they belong there and they can find themselves in a book. And if they can’t find themselves in the book, we ask them to call us out on it,” said Hess.

Hess concluded by recommending an author that all college-aged individuals should read: A.S. King. “She basically is an author that somehow makes every teenager and young adult feel heard. Her stories are incredibly tangible, while also being magical,” elaborated Hess.

Muhlenberg students are thrilled to have a local bookstore so close to campus. Autumn Andrejczak ‘26 noted, “I pass by it everyday after coming back from Lafayette. One day I hope to stop in!” Annalise Christie ‘26 expressed similar sentiments saying, “The End is such a great spot, especially being right near Nowhere Coffee!”

So, stop by The End: a bookstore, not to check off your reading list, but to instead be introduced to a whole world of new and exciting publications that you may not have previously heard of.

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Home of the Pumpkin Brûlée Brew

A festival fit for feasting

Muhlenberg students join the Allentown community for a night of food, dance, and fun

By Emma Northrop
Contributing Writer

On Saturday, Sept. 16, the Allentown community gathered on 19th and Liberty streets for the World of Food Festival. The festival is arranged every year by the West End Alliance, and all proceeds from this event go towards street banners, Christmas decor, plant maintenance and amenities.

Arriving at the festival, the first view was of an oversized truck (which, to be honest, was slightly confusing). However, on the other side of said truck (which was actually just blocking off the street) was where the festival truly began. There was a large seating area with tables covered in bright plastic cloths and all sorts of vendors lining the street. When the sun went down, the lights came on, and the atmosphere was truly electric on Liberty Street.

The festival catered to many different people. In the same area, I saw families enjoying cornhole in the kids' area, dog parents strolling the streets (sneaking a few bites to their pooches), a particularly endearing elderly couple giggling as they enjoyed a crepe and grandparents taking their grandkids for facepaint. Several Muhlenberg students made comments throughout the night about being jealous of the children, as the kids corner and face painting station were true hits. Wherever you looked, you were likely to find a ferocious tiger eating chicken tenders or a beautiful butterfly enjoying a taco.

Despite a relatively family-friendly atmosphere, in areas that were less congested (i.e.



PHOTO BY EMMA NORTHROP '27

The Allentown Fair happened Aug. 30 - Sept. 4, including food and colorful rides.

the area on 19th St. surrounding the kiddie corner), it was easier to notice the effect that the festival's wine slushies and brewery had on adult patrons. Perhaps in hindsight, it would have been a better idea to relocate the beverage tickets and winery to the opposite side of the kiddie area, as adults with very little filter were enjoying the festival in a way not conducive to families. One anonymous student, who stayed in that area because of available seating, reported the festival to be "pretty okay" and "mildly interesting." Hence, the level of excitement found at the festival definitely varied depending on where you were.

No matter the controversy, the festival was still widely enjoyed. Fiona Porter '27 summed this up with her statement, "I loved the festival! It had a very strong feeling of family and community.

It was fun to hear the music as well; it was light-hearted and danceable. Also, I loved the diversity within the food options!" Speaking of diversity, one cannot deny the festival was on theme for global foods, as there was a Greek food truck right next to an African stall, which was right next to a venue specializing in crab cakes. Some of the night's vendors included Take a Taco, Got Chocolate, Cousins Maine Lobster, Sweet Treats, Bang Cookies, Greek Street, Atomic Hogs, Bonjour Creperie, Sherri's Crabcakes, Danny's Fine Foods, Bru Daddies (the aforementioned brewery) and many more, like a Puerto Rican stand and classic carnival fare!

I personally enjoyed a chicken gyro from Greek Street and an Olivia crepe from Bonjour Creperie. The gyro was great (coming from a gyro enthusiast)

and the tzatziki was everything I had been missing in life (though in my personal opinion, it could have done with a little more dill). The crepe was also delicious, with rich dark chocolate and strawberries topped with a perfectly subtly sweet whipped cream. I would have preferred the chocolate to be warm, but it was the perfect amount of gooey, so I maintain it was a great dessert. While this was all my stomach could fit, my eyes definitely feasted on the other delicious options at the festival. What particularly stood out was the Atomic Hog Barbecue, which had a full rig setup with all the necessities for low and slow cooking. It was truly impressive, and the fact that they make their own sauces (of which there are seven (seven!) varieties) was truly the cherry on top.

As mentioned by Porter, food was not the only form

of entertainment available. Several bands performed live throughout the day, including '80s rock tribute band Video Daze, indie-alt band We're from Antarctica, multi-genre band The BC Combo and all-female high-energy band GirlCrue. While I wasn't able to witness all the performances, I did have the pleasure of watching GirlCrue. Despite some microphone feedback, the concert was engaging and you could spot Muhlenberg students dancing in the crowd. They covered a lot of the greats, like Blondie and The Rolling Stones. It was definitely packed during their performance, as walking around the stage became a contact sport, however, it was warranted, as the crowd was very engaged by their enthusiastic performance.

To say that the festival was well-stocked would be an understatement, however, that doesn't mean there isn't room for improvement. When asked what they would love to see next year, some Muhlenberg students requested Eastern European food, Thai food and pizza.

All in all, the festival received a huge turnout and rightfully so. The food was amazingly diverse and delicious, and, despite some slight logistical issues, it was a great atmosphere for people from all walks of life. One can hope that the festival will return next year, hopefully with even more global foods to sample!

FROM ETTINGER PAGE 3

tors were specially installed to flip-down, allowing the room to be multifunctional and "support a variety of teaching pedagogies," says Nagy.

The inclusive nature for the remodel was also reflected in how it was funded. Provost Laura Furge, Ph.D., explained that all funding decisions are guided by Muhlenberg's mission which states that "All members of our community are committed to educating the whole person through experiences within and beyond the classroom." In practice, this means that the College prioritizes the student experience when apportioning its annual budget "to ensure that our campus is innovative, safe, modern and attractive."

To make sure that goal is realized, Furge stated that "each year's annual budgeting process includes allocating funds for physical improvements, from basic maintenance to more sophisticated efforts." When it comes to specific projects like the Ettinger remodel, "faculty and staff originate [the] ideas years in advance. They are vetted by the College's senior leadership team and prioritized in accordance with available funds. The Finance Lab, Ettinger 105, was funded through this process. Just like the other projects, a proposal was submitted several years ago and we were able to move forward this year with the project."

Students have had mixed feelings about the remodel. Asher Bejar '26 likes some aspects of the remodel, saying that "being in there learning is like being in any

other classroom, [but it is] cool that they have computers in the desks." However, there are also aspects he is less excited about. "I found the window for tour groups a little off-putting, and the glass doors seem a little bit too fancy," he stated. "The TVs in the back of the classroom are annoying for the professors, as they no longer have a computer in front of them."

Jordyn Green '24 likes a majority of the changes as well: "I really enjoy the changes overall," she said. "I think that the setup of the room is great and it makes it easy to see the board without being blocked by another student. Having two Smart Boards makes it easier to see all of the information in PowerPoints. With that being said, the whiteboards are sometimes hard to see with the glare from the light, but having them all over the room is helpful."

Aaron Gianchandani '24, a member of the Wall Street Club, finds the changes incredibly useful. "The changes in the room are great and give the building a newer look that shows that Muhlenberg College is keeping up to date on the technology," Gianchandani described. The changes are also helpful from a learning perspective, with Gianchandani stating that "The changes help [improve the] learning environment because there are four screens in the room all showing the same information. The computers are no longer in the way and causing a distraction to learning."

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A tale of two competing papers

By AMY SWARTZ
GENERAL EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

I am a writer and editor for The Muhlenberg Weekly. It isn’t a shock to anyone that I absolutely love the organization. I also love collegiate-level journalism just as a concept. Here, students are able to write according to their own agenda; what they deem to be important. This gives college students an opportunity to have a voice on their own campus, which otherwise may be forgotten. It sheds light on both the good and bad parts of important issues on behalf of the student body, and shares the creative voices of their peers. So of course, when I got wind of a long lost competing newspaper here at Muhlenberg, I had to find out absolutely everything about it.

In last week’s issue, I covered Alumni Weekend. I got to interview alumni, go to fun events, and really just have a fantastic time seeing what Alumni Weekend was all about, all from a journalistic perspective. One of my favorite parts of the weekend was going to “Classes Without Quizzes,” where professors got to give a lecture on a range of topics for any alumni who were interested and wanted to attend. I went to the class titled “What Books Do We Love?” taught by Charles French, Ph.D., professor of English. During a discussion, one of the alumni brought up “The Muhlenberg Advocate.” He didn’t go into much detail, only that the paper lasted a few years at Muhlenberg, seemingly in the late ‘90s and early ‘00s. From the name and the alum’s few details, it sounded like a paper meant to counter The Muhlenberg Week-

ly, which shed light on a darker, grittier side of Muhlenberg.

Immediately, I was in a frenzy. I absolutely had to figure out what The Muhlenberg Advocate was all about. Did it take the place of The Weekly? Was there any bad blood between the two organizations? Was the administration on board? Did it only exist underground through speculation and secrecy? Was there a deeper, more sinister side to Muhlenberg that it uncovered? What legacy was left? I needed to know it all.

I started with a simple Google search of The Muhlenberg Advocate, and was immediately hit with disappointment: their old website asking for a new domain to be instituted. No old articles were going to be read, and no inside scoop was going to be spilled from 20 years ago.

After some scrolling on the archives of the internet, surfing through long lost social media pages, I found a Tumblr post about it. Even though I knew very little about The Advocate, a Tumblr post being the only thing I could find about it seemed very fitting. I wasn’t surprised. In the post, a Muhlenberg alum reflected on their time writing for The Advocate, and how it led them to their career. Although the bulk of the post is filled with anger on how the paper is no longer at Muhlenberg, it doesn’t cover how The Advocate fell, or what exactly happened. However, I do know that apparently its nickname was “The Advo.”

In the Tumblr post, the alum, who wrote for both The Weekly and The Advo, and expressed appreciation for both, dissected what exactly was so niche about The Advo. “It valued the writers’

ideas and opinions. It encouraged humor and creativity. Verbatim was one of the best fucking columns when it was done right. It was a damn fine publication that offered an alternative news source to the [previously speculated] administration funded Weekly.”

It’s clear that at the time Muhlenberg’s administration looked more favorably upon The Weekly than it did The Advo. In Muhlenberg’s 2006 magazine, in the “Want More News?” section, both The Weekly and The Advo were mentioned. “Keep up-to-date with all happenings at Muhlenberg at <http://www.muhlenbergweekly.com>—the online version of the most authoritative source for campus news since 1883. Register online and receive e-mail notices for every new issue published. Every article available in print, is now only a click away. The College’s online newspaper, the Advocate, is also available at www.muhlenbergadvocate.com.”

At the time, Muhlenberg clearly wanted The Weekly to be the campus publication that was read by their community, with The Advo merely being recognized as an existing organization. There isn’t any encouragement to take a look at their publication.

Why didn’t Muhlenberg want The Advo to be a source of campus information? What could they possibly have been putting into circulation? I knew I needed to try and get an actual copy of The Advo, and I did the best I could. After emailing the Head of Special Collections & College Archives at Trexler Library Susan Falciani Maldonado, I obtained old internet copies of

The Weekly that mentioned The Advo, all from the Muhlenberg Archives. Now that I’ve read all of the times The Advo was mentioned, I can confidently say that they had an interesting relationship with both The Weekly and Muhlenberg’s administration.

The first time The Advo was ever mentioned in The Weekly was on Feb. 24, 2000, when The Advo’s constitution was passed by Student Council, which is now known as the Student Government Association (SGA). In that same issue, an article was published entitled “Welcome To The Club”. Essentially, it’s an entire article slandering The Advo. The writer takes blows at their mission statement to report on world news in addition to Muhlenberg happenings, along with their editing and their use of punctuation, claiming “If, indeed, the Editorial Board of The Advocate is serious about founding a journalistic publication, please learn how to use the English language properly.”

There was definitely some bad blood between the two publications, seeing as The Weekly went as far as to insult The Advo’s grammatical skills—skills that are the bare bones of journalistic reporting.

The only other place I could locate any mention of The Advo was in 2005. Muhlenberg College nominated The Advo for a Henry Award, now known as the Halamy Award, which honors high achieving organizations and individuals throughout the past year. Administration was in control of who was nominated. Clearly, the relationship between the two entities improved enough for them to get a nomination. Still, it can be assumed

they didn’t win, as no discussion of The Advo can be found later on in any potential articles naming the winners.

What I find most compelling is the complete lack of information on The Advo. The Advo is only mentioned a handful of times throughout all accessible archives. It’s not mentioned at all after 2005. Now I ask, what changed between 2005 and around 2008, when The Advo dissipated? Why didn’t The Weekly mention them in any more issues, why didn’t they have any formal recognition from administration?

I don’t have any concrete answers to these questions, but I can make many speculations, and I hope you can too. What I will say, and strongly believe, is that the importance of The Advo can’t be overlooked.

Now, The Weekly has taken over some of the previous domain that The Advo used to hold. While The Advo was active, The Weekly included a space for faculty and staff to publish pieces. The Weekly has since instituted a policy where only students can write, other than letters to the editors. Currently, The Weekly is funded by SGA, so students can have their own voice, independent of administrative input.

The Advo’s seemingly fast decline, and now almost full erasure from Muhlenberg archives, gives them a reputation that’s uniquely their own. The Advo was clearly a hot topic during its time as an organization, leaving Muhlenberg with only a hint of anarchy in the air.

SGA DEI&B Report

One of our goals this semester is to make the events and actions of affinity groups more prominent in our community. There have been complaints about the difficulty of finding information regarding affinity groups, so the purpose of this section is to centralize all of this information. This week, you can find all of the active affinity groups under the Office of Multicultural Life listed below as well as their Instagram handles. The DEI&B Committee meets every Monday at 4:30 in the SGA Office located in the student life suite. These meetings are open to anyone so feel free to stop by or email me at bqian@muhlenberg.edu. ~The SGA DEI&B Committee

- African Student Organization (ASO) @aso.muhlenberg
- Asian Student Association (ASA) @muhlenbergasa
- Black Student Association (BSA) @bsa_muhlenberg
- Comunidad @muhlenbergcomunidad
- Feminist Collective (FemCo) @berg.femco
- International Student Association (ISA) @muhlenberg_isa
- Mayhem Step Team @mayhem.stepteam
- Men of Color Network (MCN) @mcn_muhlenberg
- Muhlenberg Disability Advocacy Group (MDAG) @muhlenbergdag
- Muslim Student Association (MSA) @muhlenbergmsa
- Poised Ivy @berg.majorette
- Queer and Trans People of Color Collective (QTPOCC) @berg_qtpocc
- South Asian Student Association (SASA) @muhlenbergsasa
- Students for Queer Advocacy (SQuAd) @muhlenbergsquad
- Student of Caribbean Ancestry (SOCA) @bergsoca
- Women of Color Collective (WCC) @wcc_berg



Listen Loudly



A creative space for marginalized voices

Listen Loudly is a creative space for marginalized voices. Students can submit poems, essays, artistic prose, non-fiction, fiction, you name it! There are little to no restrictions! The Op-Ed section as a whole aims to amplify student voices, experiences and opinions. This is especially important amongst marginalized communities. We are always looking to expand the amount of writers that we have, so that we can hear more voices and learn more about the general lives of the student body. This is exactly why student journalism is so important, and why we MUST keep writing: to get our thoughts out there and hopefully enact movement and change. What better way to do so than through creativity? While this may be intimidating, remember, you can’t be heard if you’re saying it inside your head, so say it to us. Therefore, we strongly encourage you to submit to our section.

To submit, please email us at bergweeklyoped@gmail.com at any time with a link to your piece, and a few sentences telling us about yourself. We look forward to hearing from you.

Get creative, Muhlenberg!

Top 10 covers that are better than the originals

By KATHERINE CONLON
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Picture this: you’re driving down the streets of Allentown listening to your favorite Spotify playlist. When you run out of songs, the app starts playing similar music on shuffle. All of a sudden, you hear a song that sounds familiar; same lyrics, same title, same melody, but... a different artist?! You listen to the song in full and a realization dawns upon you: the cover is better than the original! If that’s something that seems inconceivable to you, here are the top ten covers that are better than the originals (according to my INCREDIBLE music taste):

10) “Till There Was You” (by The Beatles): Originally featured in the Broadway musical “The Music Man,” John, Paul, George and Ringo’s take on this tune brings it into a whole new light. You will see later in this list that I hate on The Beatles, but here I can definitively say that the iconic band’s plunky, guitar-heavy rendition is preferable to the theatrical duet (especially the recent revival’s, which was trash).

9) “Can’t Help Falling in Love” (by Kacey Musgraves): This is going to be controversial but I believe that Musgraves’ cover, which was recorded for the movie soundtrack of “Elvis” (2022), is in fact better than the King of Rock and Roll’s original. Musgraves’s smooth, silky tone is perfect for this quaint love song. Her recording brings a modern take to the classic while still letting aspects of the original shine through.

8) “Shameless” (by Garth Brooks): Yes, the rumors are true—I like country music (if you hadn’t already guessed by the Kacey Musgraves pick). Now, I’m not usually pro-male country artist, just because it’s a little too “beer and trucks” for my liking. However, Garth Brooks on this track is my guilty pleasure. He took one of Billy Joel’s only flops and turned it into a sweeping rendition and a huge hit.

7) “Heart of Glass” (by Miley Cyrus): Here’s my hot take: Blondie’s version of this song is boring; it feels kind of monotonous (sue me). Miley flipped the switch, however, when she performed this cover at the iHeart Festival. She FED US with this rock version. Her rich, yet abrasive voice found its home in this song, which is why it has made this very definitive, official list.

6) “Doin’ Time” (by Lana Del Rey): “This song is so Lana Del Rey vinyl.” But in all seriousness I am absolutely obsessed with this song and “Norman Fucking Rockwell,” the album it is featured on. This album is Del Rey’s magnum opus. Call me ignorant, but I didn’t even realize this song was a cover until a friend of mine told me that a band called Sublime sang it first. So, I listened to the

original and all I have to say is: don’t waste your time; Lana will always come out on top.

5) “That Funny Feeling” (by Phoebe Bridgers): This song was originally created for comedian Bo Burnham’s Netflix special “Inside.” The tune is a satirical commentary on our modern capitalistic society with lyrics like “In honor of the revolution, it’s half-off at the Gap.” However, Bridgers does what she does best and turns this song into THE MOST DEVASTATING THING YOU WILL EVER LISTEN TO. Now, Burnham and Bridgers are in a relationship and I can’t help but wonder if they argue about who sang this best.

4) “Push” (by Ryan Gosling): I saw “Barbie” three times in theaters. I think that explains why this is here.

3) “Untouchable (Taylor’s Version)” (by Taylor Swift): You think I was going to do a music rankings list without putting Taylor Alison Swift on it? Absolutely not! Many die-hard Swifties don’t even know that this is a cover (fake fans). This is probably because the original sounds NOTHING like Swift’s version. Originally recorded by Luna Halo, the song fit into the punk-rock genre. Swift put her country-pop spin on it for her sophomore album “Fearless.” And let’s just be real, if Taylor Swift covers your song, it’s gonna be better than when you sang it originally. I don’t make the rules!

2) “Valerie” (by Mark Ronson ft. Amy Winehouse): Here’s another one that I did not know was a cover until very recently. So, naturally, I had to listen to the original by The Zutons. And all I have to say is: “why is a man singing?” Ronson and Winehouse’s cover is pure magic and possesses a fun 1960’s flair. Winehouse had gold in her vocal chords and everyday I wish we could hear more of her signature R&B style (RIP legend).

1) “Across the Universe” (by Fiona Apple): Here’s the TRUTH: Fiona Apple wrote this song. She. wrote. it. See I told you I would hate on The Beatles and you didn’t believe me but here I am. This cover is actually my religion. The impact of Lennon and McCartney’s psychedelic lyrics is increased tenfold by the new instrumentals Apple brings to her cover. And if I’m being so real, I don’t think The Beatles are good singers. I think that this song was craving Apple’s deep alto voice. So, in my mind, this is Fiona Apple’s song and no one can take that away from her.

That’s all for this ranking. If you’re upset by my choices, just be happy that I didn’t include any “Glee” covers (I’m looking at you “Teenage Dream”).



*Tiny horoscopes for a tiny campus
Weekly advice and predictions
communicated by Victor’s Lament*

Aquarius (January 20 – February 18)
You, like many of us, don’t think about John Travolta nearly enough. Try to fix that.

Pisces (February 19 – March 20)
Sometimes innovation is overrated. Like did we really need deep fried oreos? “Pride and Prejudice and Zombies,” however, was completely necessary.

Aries (March 21 – April 19)
Sometimes it’s helpful to visualize your goals; draw a little stick figure of yourself shaking hands with another little stick figure of Kathy Harring at graduation.

Taurus (April 20 – May 20)
You may find that what’s missing from your life is the cover of “Jump” from season 1, episode 12 of “Glee.” Maybe also an SSRI.

Gemini (May 21 – June 20)
Who needs to mail someone a glitter bomb when you could just be the human equivalent of one? They’ll find pieces of you stuck in their psyche for the rest of their life.

Cancer (June 21 – July 22)
Spice up your love life with some puns. You’ll be cuffed in no thyme.

Leo (July 23 – August 22)
This week your hair will always be a little off no matter what you do. I’m sorry to be the one to break this news to you.

Virgo (August 23 – September 22)
This week you feel responsible for everything but the kitchen sink. Your roommates will forget to do their dishes and you’ll become responsible for that too.

Libra (September 23 – October 22)
There’s no “I” in team, but there is in expectoration. Take some Claritin, the fall allergies are setting in.

Scorpio (October 23 – November 21)
Do you want to be the coaster, or the glass on top of it? Think about it.

Sagittarius (November 22 – December 21)
Blood is thicker than water, but bbq sauce is thicker than blood. Isn’t viscosity fascinating?

Capricorn (December 22 – January 19)
Listen, you’re literally just a teenage girl. What more could the world ask of you? This applies regardless of gender identity—being a teenage girl is a state of mind.

‘Berg men’s tennis team starts the season with a roar

By PENELOPE SCHNEIDER
ROOKIE WRITER

In an impressive showing, the Muhlenberg men’s tennis team dove head first into the 2023-24 season with a resounding 8-1 victory over DeSales University on Sept. 16. The Mules, sporting a lineup composed of five talented first-years and one sophomore, left a mark on the court as they secured victory in nearly every contest. Among several standout performances, Gabriel Tamarkin ‘26 emerged as the star of the

day. He delivered a masterful 6-1, 6-0 triumph in his No. 6 singles match, and alongside Josh Simon ‘27, orchestrated an emphatic 8-0 shutout at No. 3 doubles. Simon displayed remarkable resilience, clinching victory in his No. 5 singles match with a thrilling third-set super tiebreaker. Not to be outdone, brothers Sebastian Meyer ‘27 and Syver-August Meyer ‘27, along with Owen Dyer ‘27, etched their names in Muhlenberg’s books by having wins in both singles and doubles during their inaugural collegiate matches.

PHOTO BY ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY ‘27.



Men’s Tennis take swings at the ball.

Sebastian Meyer, a promising newcomer, particularly shined as he secured victory in straight sets at the prestigious No. 1 singles position, matching a formidable three-time All-MAC Freedom player from DeSales. This electrifying performance by the young Mules marks the beginning of an exciting tennis season filled with boundless potential and enthusiasm. “We practice six days a week

for at least two hours. During these practices, our coach gives us tactics and strategies to work on that we can utilize in our actual matches,” Simon stated. It is undeniable that the team’s relentless hours of work are paying off. Tamarkin voiced that the team wants to “continue to be consistent in practices and apply this to future matches and [overall] keep getting more wins

on the board.” It’s safe to say we are all looking forward to the doubleheader at home against Pennsylvania State University and Albright this upcoming Saturday, Sept. 23. Hope to see you all there, Go MULES!

Women’s field hockey with the golden goal

By LEXI SIPOS
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

On Sept. 12, Muhlenberg’s field hockey team participated in an out-of-conference game against Fairleigh Dickinson (FDU)-Florham. The competition was set, and both teams were eager to battle for points toward their season totals. Entering the contest, FDU-Florham’s record was 1-2 (wins-losses), and the Mules were 2-2, exemplifying that the match would be an intense challenge between the players. Throughout the competition, the team outlined their goals with their coach to ensure fluidity and consistency over the course of the match. Erin DiSandro ‘26 emphasized their objectives in commenting, “To prepare mentally, our coach just reminded us to play our game and play ‘Berg hockey because the environment towards the end of the game was getting very tense and FDU was a very physical team. So we all reminded ourselves to not let them frazzle us and keep playing our game and we will come out on top and that’s exactly what we did.” This structure is what propelled them past their expectations for the game. 60 minutes of gameplay was not enough for these teams. As excitement rose, they went into



PHOTO BY ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY ‘27.

Women’s Field Hockey faces Montclair State on Sept 15, 2023.

double overtime at 1-1. The first goal was scored by Abba Diglio ‘26 in the second quarter of the game. Diglio’s goal kept ‘Berg alive to enter overtime because FDU tied the score up in the third quarter. She said, “We were energized [going into overtime], but frustrated because we felt like we were already robbed of a goal and it should be our game.”

The players came out in overtime, and it was definitely their game. The Mules wanted to get the “golden goal”. This means that during overtime whichever team scores first wins the final match. All of their hard work was flowing in overtime. Finally, in the last overtime with 1:24 left on the clock, Katie Raab ‘24 scored,

ending the game in favor of the Mules off a penalty corner. This was exactly what the team has been working on and striving towards in their games. Diglio commented specifically on the team’s tactical goals before the game, “We wanted to score off a corner, have successful transfers, and capitalize when we can.” The golden goal was direct-

ly implemented into the game to successfully stop the clock with the Mules on top. Captain Taylor Canfield gave recognition to her teammates. “Katie Raab and Erin Disandro really stood out to me in this game by constantly trying to create offensive plays. Katie was controlling the middle of the field for most of the game and getting the ball up to our attacking 25 as well as scoring the game-winning goal.” The effort across the board created a positive atmosphere giving Muhlenberg the win for the books. Most of all, the women’s field hockey team is utilizing this win to motivate them into their next game and future competitions. The team is fired up for the rest of their season, and this game only fueled their energy. DiSandro said, “This win definitely had a huge impact on our confidence as a team and gave us that momentum to keep working hard and playing to our best ability. I think this exciting overtime win really showed us what we are capable of and that we have the potential to make it very far this season. We also had a great win against Moravian before this game, so these two games combined really gave us the momentum and confidence we need as we are about to enter into conference play.”

Berg soccer plays a doubleheader in Baltimore

By DYLAN ROSENBLATT
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

This past Saturday, both of Muhlenberg’s soccer teams drove down to Baltimore to square up against Johns Hopkins University in a doubleheader. Coming into the season, both the men’s and women’s Johns Hopkins soccer teams ranked in the top ten of the Division III top 25 preseason poll, with their men’s team ranked in the seventh spot, and their women’s team– the reigning 2022 Division III women’s soccer national champions– ranked number one in the country.

The men’s game kicked off first at 1:00 p.m., and for them, this was more than just another game. Last November, the mules defeated Johns Hopkins on the Blue Jays’ home field in a penalty shootout to capture their first Centennial Conference championship since 2014 and the team’s seventh in school history. As this was Muhlenberg’s first time back at the field where they were crowned champions nearly a year ago, the players were experiencing many emotions when they arrived.

“There was a lot of excitement going back to the field. Obviously, we created a great memory there so it was cool to feel some of that again. However, we had a job to do so we had to do our best to temper those emotions and focus on the game at hand. The one positive is that the experience gave us a level of familiarity we didn’t have the last time. We knew what to expect and were comfortable,” said Captain Zack Mikuta ‘24.

Regardless of any feelings the team had when they arrived at the field, they knew that this game could be their biggest chal-

lenge all season. Despite beating Johns Hopkins to win the Centennial championship last year, their team was still ranked higher than Muhlenberg in the 2023 Centennial Conference preseason rankings. Not only did the team know this was going to be a tough game, but they also approached the game knowing Johns Hopkins may certainly want to redeem their loss from last fall.

Mikuta commented, “It’s always tough to play [Johns] Hopkins. They never deviate from their game plan, and constantly keep you on your toes defensively. It’s never an easy 90 minutes, but I thought we did well to have our own identity and make it about us rather than them, which is something we’ve strug-

gled with in past games. As far as them wanting revenge, they conducted themselves as if it was a normal game. I felt they could’ve had more fire, but I guess that’s a credit to their professionalism and focus as a team. We did well to bring our intensity and show that we’re the top team for a reason and we’re not going anywhere.”

When the final whistles were blown, the game finished as a 1-1 tie and the men’s team currently sits at an overall record of 3-1-1 (wins, losses and ties).

The women’s game began once the men’s game concluded, and just like the men’s team knew that their game was going to be a challenge, the women certainly knew that their opponent was also no joke. The Johns

Hopkins women’s team has only lost a total of three games in the past three seasons.

However, this year’s Muhlenberg women’s team is much improved compared to last year’s. Despite four seniors graduating in May, this year’s team has won as many games through their first five games of this season, as the team did the entire 2022 season.

Center Midfielder Regina Russo ‘24 comments on what the team took away from their trip to Maryland. “Playing Hopkins showed us what to expect when playing in a top level conference. As we move through the early parts of the season, we have proved to ourselves that we are a more composed, organized and competitive team than last

year. We are also a more possession based team this season and I think this will be the key to perform the best that we can. This match was our first chance to prove this to the rest of the conference. Even though we came up short, we still displayed signs of progress that we work to achieve everyday on the field.”

In their previous matchup before playing Johns Hopkins, the women’s team beat Fairleigh Dickinson University-Florham 1-0, a team they lost to 5-0 last year. “It was a huge win for us, and was important for our team to see that tangible progress. We are trusting in the process, in our coaches, and in each other,” stated Team Captain Olivia Oberman ‘24.

Unfortunately, the women were unable to come away with a victory, and now have a record of 2-2-2. With one of their toughest opponents of the season in their rearview mirror, the team is working diligently towards future wins.

Oberman continues, “Despite not getting the outcome we had wanted, we did see a lot of progress from last year and created many highlights during play. We learned both that we have more work to do but also that the work we are doing is paying off in more ways than one. We are excited to get into conference play, not only to show how far we have come but to prove to ourselves just how far we can go.”

On Saturday, Sept. 23, the men’s and women’s soccer teams take part in another in-conference doubleheader. This time around, they face Dickinson College at home, with the men’s game kicking off at 1:00 p.m. and the women’s game at 4:00 p.m.



PHOTO BY ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY ‘27.

The Women’s soccer team passing the ball.

Fantasy football first-timer

By ADDISON STAR
ROOKIE WRITER

I love fantasy football. I truly never expected to hear those words come from my mouth, especially since watching football was a once-a-year event for me during the Superbowl. But when my friends needed more people for their league, I said yes.

Fantasy football allows those who participate to serve as a “manager” that creates their ideal football team. One chooses players from a variety of teams and positions via a draft. Managers can have a total of 17 players: ten are starters, six on the bench, and one on injured reserve (which just means that they aren’t playing because they’re hurt). The goal each week is to have the most points, which means that you want to have the best players. Having better players equates to more points because points are determined by rushing yards (how far the player runs with the ball), touchdown rushes and receptions (when the player runs the ball into or catches the ball in the endzone), receiving yards (how far did the ball travel in the air before the person successfully caught it) and number of receptions (catching the ball). I didn’t grow up watching football and I’m learning all of this for the first time, which is why I started this column. I wanted to be able to impart what I’m learning to those who want to start participating in fantasy football or who just want to be able to follow a conversation with their friends or significant

other who participates.

I truly had no idea what I was doing, and I still don’t. However, I think I get the concept after pestering my friends with questions, specifically my key advisor, Owen Dyer ‘27. In my opinion, for anyone starting Fantasy Football, the best way to do it is to jump in feet first and go with it. I can honestly say that I’ve had a lot of fun so far and it’s only the first week. It can definitely get confusing, but I guarantee you that people who participate LOVE talking about it and will be more than happy to show off their knowledge by answering your questions. If that doesn’t work, look it up, you’ll get the answer you’re looking for.

Oddly enough, I found myself watching Thursday night football, and I enjoyed it. Watching D’Andre Swift run into the endzone with the ball was exhilarating and it was nice to have a stake in the game, which I have never had before. There have been so many things that have happened during this first week: players have gotten hurt, trades have been made, and other fantasy team managers have lost, including myself. My loss was in part because I drafted two people who were injured, not realizing that they were injured. I wasn’t able to gain any points from them. Piece of advice– make sure you take a thorough glance at all the players that you are considering drafting beforehand.

Even though I lost, I’d still count this week as a win. I can’t wait to keep participating in fantasy and keeping you all informed on what’s going on and what I’ve learned in the coming weeks.

NOTABLE WAIVER WIRE PICKS



Robert Woods (WR)

Even with Nico Collins acting as the obvious front runner on the Texan’s offense, Robert Woods should have plenty of volume going into his matchup against the Jacksonville Jaguars this Sunday. Against a 24th ranked defense Woods should sit comfortably in the 8-10 target range with a possible upside. Woods already commands a 22.1% target share on the fifth most pass friendly offense. Especially as CJ Stroud gets more comfortable in his role under center, Robert Woods looks like a great WR3/Flex option in a PPR league.

Roschon Johnson (RB)

With the league changing injuries this week, there are some stand-out running backs on the waivers, namely Jerome Ford and Matt Breida who are both taking over their respective starting spots. If you are not lucky enough to pick one of them up, turn your attention to Roschon Johnson. Johnson recorded only four carries for 32 yards on Sunday and while his recent stats are underwhelming, his future may be bright. At some point, even the abysmal Bears offense will start to recognize Johnson’s incredible efficiency of 5.8 yard per carry. Although Johnson may not be an obvious start this Sunday, after Ford and Breida are off the board, Johnson will be a good investment to stash.

PHOTO BY ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY '27.



‘Berg football takes down The College of New Jersey before conference play.

By EVAN SCHLOTTERBECK
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

On Saturday, Sept. 16, the Mules entered the jungle with one goal: to remove the king from his throne. Several days later, they left Ewing, N.J., having dethroned the Lions and all else who stood in their way.

24th-ranked Muhlenberg football posted a 38-10 victory over The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) in their final game before beginning conference matches, continuing their undefeated opening to the season. These early contests, while against out-of-conference opponents, are crucial for players and coaches in evaluating implemented strategies and systems before heading into Centennial Conference action. Yes, every game is equally important, and the goal is to always come out on top, but conference games are always more fiery, faster-paced and detail-oriented than any other.

“Playing in the Centennial [Conference] is really a gauntlet,” said Josh Castro ‘25. “Any team can beat any other team on

any given Saturday. We’ve had a lot of opportunities to learn from small mistakes that happen early in the season, so we should be tuned up when it matters as we start our Centennial schedule.” An attitude shared amongst teammates that will help the Mules weather the storm during their upcoming conference schedule.

Defensive back Alex Batista ‘24 echoed a similar message: “All three teams [we have played] were great programs, but our focus is always and will continue to be on us. The Centennial Conference is one of the best conferences in the country, and whenever you lace those cleats up, you have to bring your best during every play.”

These weeks of preparation have served the team well thus far, and they are eager to continue fine-tuning their game plans.

Regardless of how close the coaching staff is to perfecting their schemes, the players are

still hungry to perform, with their victory over TCNJ being an example. “I think we did a great job focusing on executing our system at a high level and not worrying about what the opponent is going to do,” added Castro. “We’re starting to develop an identity and figure out what works best for us as a team. We have a lot of great players who make plays when we call on them.”

“I think we did a great job focusing on executing our system at a high level”

‘Berg was also well equipped to handle TCNJ’s pass-first offense: “Defensively, we executed and did our job,” said Batista. “We anticipated a heavy pass game heading into the week and understood a lot of the game

would come down to our secondary versus their receivers. We embraced it with open arms and welcomed the challenge.” Coming off of this week, the team should feel confident in their ability to handle dynamic Centennial Conference foes and control the tempo of games, not the other way around.

The Mules jumped up a spot in the Division III national ranking after this weekend, from 25

to 24. Being a part of the top 25 is commendable, but the team’s mentality remains fixated on improving week in and week out. “We really aren’t focused on any national ranking or media chatter,” explained Castro. “We know we’re a good football team, and our focus is just

on going 1-0 each weekend and letting the polls rank us wherever they think we belong. We appreciate the recognition, but polls don’t win football games and we haven’t done anything worth celebrating yet. We’re just

focused internally and taking care of what we can control each week.”

Being a senior, Batista reflected on some previous teams he has been a part of at Muhlenberg that have also been nationally recognized: “As an upperclassman who has been lucky enough to play on some pretty good teams here at Muhlenberg, I try to pass along to underclassmen that all the ranking does is place an even bigger target on our backs. Although it is amazing to receive that recognition, we have to put it behind us and continue to stack good weeks to reach our goals/aspirations for the season.”


Actions speak louder than words, or in this case rankings, and this ambitious group is solely keen on returning the Centennial Conference trophy to Allentown. The hunt for that trophy begins on Saturday, Sept. 27 when the Mules will travel to Collegeville, Pa., to take on another fierce predator with the Ursinus Bears.

Coming up this week in

SPORTS


Sept. 21 - Sept. 27

Women’s Tennis




Fri, Sept. 22 @ 4:00 p.m.
Allentown, Pa.

Men’s Tennis




Sat, Sept. 23 @ 10:00 a.m.
Kern Field Courts

Field Hockey



Sat, Sept. 23 @ 1:00 p.m.
Scotty Wood Stadium

Men’s Soccer



Sat, Sept. 23 @ 1:00 p.m.
Varsity Field

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ARC tutors struggle with limited pay.

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ARTS & CULTURE

Director Shira Holtz '24 prepares for MTA Studios.

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OP-ED

Katherine Conlon '24 reviews Chappell Roan's debut album.

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SPORTS

'Berg volleyball battles Gettysburg Bullets.

read more on page 11



Lost in the labyrinth

SEE PAGE 5
PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR MADDIE CILIENTO

“Dreading doing my laundry” *The cost of keeping it clean*

BY JOHNNY VEGLIA
MANAGING EDITOR

The Muhlenberg Independent Living Experience (MILE) area allows for students to live in college-owned housing in off-campus areas and locations. This allows for unique benefits, but also some challenges. One of these challenges is utilizing the six laundry rooms and spaces for residents.

Isabelle Peters '24 posted a TikTok on Sept. 11 highlighting her experience in one of the MILE Neighborhood laundry rooms for her accommodation on 22nd Street. The video showcased the unruly state of the laundry room, which included trash and filth. “Honestly I was just dreading doing my laundry because at that point there was so much trash and rotting leaves it was starting to smell... So I figured I would just make it into a funny video.”

Housing & Residence Life (HRL) saw the TikTok and responded immediately, sending an email to Peters and cleaning the facility for students in the MILE. Peters continued, “I actually did receive an email from housing just a couple days after I posted the TikTok apologizing for the state of the laundry room and informing me that they were getting Plant Ops out there that day!”

“They really got to work fast! They cleaned up the outside stairway, swept and cleared out the furniture from the basement and repainted all the walls. They also repaired all the machines

and set up a lost and found down there. It was such a nice surprise when I went down there and it looked so much better,” noted Peters.

Housing and Residence Life commented on the laundry rooms in the MILE area and how they compare to those in traditional residence halls. Housing stated, “Significantly fewer students use the MILE laundry rooms than in most traditional halls (Example: East

Advisors (RAs). “During the semester they are cleaned on a biweekly basis and HRL staff including RAs check periodically throughout the semester. If any issues arise in the meantime, we rely on students using the laundry rooms to report issues. This can be done by sharing issues with your resident advisor or emailing issues to housing@muhlenberg.edu.”

The MILE Neighborhood RAs look after the various

they come, but I also have to live them.”

Graniero continued, “I literally avoid using the laundry room because I have no clue what kind of situation I will find. Whether both machines are taken, or one or both of the machines is broken, it's like Schrodinger's laundry, I'd rather be left wondering than find out something is wrong.”

Another challenge for residents can be the distance of the laundry rooms from their living accommodations. Peters mentioned, “The laundry room for our neighborhood is right next-door to my house, so it's not that far of a walk, but I know for a lot of others it's almost two blocks away.”

Housing discussed the distance of the laundry rooms from residents in their comment and how that factored into deciding which spaces would best be utilized for residents. “We have evaluated the zones for the laundry rooms and the reason that Albright and Tilghman have fewer students is because they are farther from the bulk of the MILE residents, so the laundry rooms that have more people are significantly closer to where those residents live.”

This distance has proven to be a challenge for some residents, however, especially if they do not have a car. Brian Silberman '25 is currently living in the MILE area and struggles with the distance of the laundry rooms from his living accommodation.



PHOTO BY KATHERINE CONLON '24

Hall 40 residents/per machine, Liberty Street 25 residents per machine).”

The six laundry rooms have varying ranges of residents assigned to them. Albright has 20 residents, Gordon has 45, Leh has 28, Liberty has 50, North 22nd has 50 and Tilghman has 16 residents.

HRL also informed The Weekly that the machines and cleanliness of these laundry rooms are checked by employees routinely, including the Resident

accommodations on Liberty, 22nd, Gordon, Albright and other streets close to campus. These RAs oversee multiple students who live in their general areas. One RA, Vanessa Graniero '24, mentioned the struggles the laundry rooms bring for their residents and for their position.

“We have two machines for 30 people. For the first month-ish of the academic year, one of each of the machines didn't work, so it left one for 30 people. As an RA, I have to solve these problems as

THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY

Serving the Muhlenberg College Community since 1883

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We request that advertising material be submitted by the Monday preceding publication at 5 p.m. If materials have not been received at that time, the advertisement will not run and the advertiser is still responsible for 100% payment. We reserve the right to decline any advertisement that is misleading, inaccurate, fraudulent, or deemed generally unacceptable. This determination will be made by the Business Staff in consultation with the Editor-in-Chief. The Muhlenberg Weekly maintains a distinction between its news & editorial content and advertising. As such, advertisements will not be accepted if they imitate the general style of The Weekly, intentionally or unintentionally. Examples of this include, but are not limited to: headlines, bylines, fonts, and column-arrangements. In order to make this distinction, The Weekly also reserves the right to include the word "advertisement" on any advertisement that is deemed too native.

CAMPUS SAFETY NOTES

9/19/23

Lost Property—Report of lost cell phone.

9/20/23

Theft—Report of wallet stolen from vehicle.

The Allentown Police Department was also notified.

9/21/23

Traffic Accident—Report of minor motor vehicle accident in the commuter lot, individuals identified, spoken to and exchanged information.

Injured Student—Report of injured student in Seegers Union, MC EMS responded, student refused further treatment or transport.

9/23/23

Vandalism—Report of damage to utility sink in Taylor Hall, Plant Operation notified to replace, no suspects at this time.

9/24/23

Alcohol Violation—Report of alcohol violation on Albright St., individuals identified and spoken to, alcohol disposed of, also notified was the possession of drug paraphernalia, investigation to continue.

9/25/23

Sick Student—Report of sick student in Prosser Hall, Allentown EMS responded and transported student to the hospital.

Corrections

Avi Pullin '25 was not credited for his column "Notable waiver wire picks" in the last issue's print edition.

Check out what's new at the GQ!

FEATURED FOR A LIMITED TIME:

- Beef Tacos
- Twisted Beef Wrap
- Pink Velvet Cake

Parfait

Honey Crisp Apple Salad



@BERGDINING



Peer tutors call out limited pay

By SAMANTHA TEMPKIN
ASSTISTANT NEWS EDITOR

The recent increase in student wages for on-campus jobs at Muhlenberg was a long-awaited victory for student employees. Along with this victory comes a new challenge for both employees and employers alike. Departments such as the Academic Resource Center (ARC) are examining how an increase in salaries could affect their budget usage.

Tutors and learning assistants (LAs) are paid by the hour, whether they are working with a student individually, preparing for workshop lessons, attending faculty meetings or facilitating workshops. The majority of the organization’s budget is dedicated to student salaries, 35 percent of which comes from endowment funds solely for the ARC. However, the fact that the ARC’s payment system depends on the supply of tutors and the demand of students seeking academic assistance makes it difficult for the department to foresee just how much of that budget will be dedicated to salaries. For this reason, the ARC seems to be paying strict attention to the activity of each of their employees to make sure that the portion of the budget dedicated to salaries is being spent appropriately. The ARC’s dramatic shift from past years’ policy enforcement is difficult for student workers to contend with.

For example, an anonymous employee, who serves as both a tutor and LA, explained how LAs used to have a “soft” limit of working ten hours per week, meaning that it was not a major problem if an LA went over ten hours. Due to the increase in student wages, there is now a “hard” limit of nine hours per week that LAs are not allowed to go over. This has been an issue for some LAs in that nine hours is not always enough time to carry out all of their responsibilities, and if they go over that limit, they are not compensated

for it. The anonymous source elaborated on their personal concerns: “...cutting LA hours (at least for me) isn’t as simple as going to one less lecture or doing one less hour of workshop prep, it has a knock on effect that makes me less effective and less useful to the students...I need to work more than nine hours per week in order to do my job effectively.”

Giovanna Anzalone ‘24 has been working both as a tutor and LA since the spring semester of her freshman year and is now working as an LA for courses in organic chemistry. Anzalone described how her typical week of work as an LA includes two-hour workshops twice a week and three hours of lecture content, leaving her with only two hours for prep time for workshops, weekly meetings, assisting students per request, and more. She said, “I think it’s really great that we got a raise, raises are normally never a bad thing. I just think with the budget cuts they received, it’s kind of hard to see the benefits of having a raise just because our hours are a lot more restricted now. That’s not by any means the ARC’s fault; they unfortunately do not have a say in their budget and I don’t think they had a say in our raises either...but it’s just hard...we thought a raise is supposed to be a good thing. But we do the math, [and] we are losing money being restricted to nine hours.”

Issues related to the limitation of hours in the ARC are affecting tutors as well as LAs: “I do know that I have plenty of hours open to tutor and the ARC is not giving me more people to tutor, despite there being a need. The insulting thing about all of this is that the ARC told us that all of their workers would receive a raise: LAs from \$10 to \$11 per hour and tutors from \$8 to \$9.25 per hour. However, with the new hour limitations, it is essentially a pay cut. Cutting workshops is not new, but I think it is a slimy way to save money. Usually if a workshop av-

erages under 5 people per workshop for several weeks, the ARC will cut the workshop,” said the anonymous source.

“I want to be really clear on this: it’s a good problem to have. It’s important to support wage increases,” says David Hollowell, the assistant dean of academic life who oversees the ARC. Hollowell explained how the ARC is a unique organization in terms of its reaction to increased student wages due to its “supply and demand” model that is inherent in the tutoring system.

Hollowell explained this in further detail with the following statement: “What we have done to make sure that we’re being budget conscious is really just to make sure that we are being as disciplined as we can by adhering to the policies and practices that are put in place for the existence of the Academic Resource Center...which is something we have always had to do, but becomes more important given the wage increase—just making sure that there aren’t any inefficiencies... we have to make sure that we don’t have a large number of tutors who aren’t working, which seems weird, right? It’s contrary to what you would think...but there’s a cost associated with training someone and not using them. So, it’s about making sure that we not only are staffed appropriately to meet demand, but also making sure that we don’t have significant excess supply in various areas.”

Hollowell asserted that the department has not done anything to artificially limit the number of tutors and workshops as they remain consistent with numbers in past years. His data reported that 273 individual and small-group sessions have already been logged, as well as 99 course-specific workshops have already been hosted “with approximately 295 unique students in attendance at one or more.” The ARC also recognizes that there are multiple reasons, both logistical and pedagogical, why workshops could be low in



The view of the Academic Resource Center.

attendance. Hollowell described how the ARC works with learning assistants and faculty alike when this is the case to assess what needs to change.

Even so, Hollowell also noted how this change may include scheduling workshops less frequently: “In other cases, you know, there have been times where, because of the structure of the course, we have taken out some weeks of workshop, and we’ve replaced it with individual office hours. So we just tried to be as flexible as we can, while also being good stewards of the budget.”

Learning assistants and tutors seem to be generally understanding of the necessary actions the ARC has taken to navigate the increase in student wages. Despite the anonymous employee’s criticism of the ARC, they also noted, “I think that the ARC could benefit from more support. As of now, they seem to be understaffed and underfunded. Ideally the administration would give them more money so we can support our students. This really isn’t the ARC’s fault but rather the administration’s.”

Anzalone also expressed how employees in general have been understanding of what the ARC has had to do in response to the increase in wages. Along with this understanding has come the willingness of some students to rearrange their working schedules and to split up responsi-

bilities with co-workers. Upon reaching out to Hollowell about her concerns regarding being unable to complete her work in the span of nine hours per week, Anzalone stated how the ARC has been helping her to navigate these changes by working with her learning assistant partner.

“Instead of prepping all the worksheets together each week, I handle the Wednesday ones, he handles the Sunday ones, and it works. I definitely prefer doing them together just because I find it easier to be able to understand what’s on the worksheet or recall it a lot easier, but I understand that we couldn’t go over our hours, and David was very nice and clear about that in terms of his response.”

The anonymous employee previously mentioned did not have a similar reaction to the change in hour limitations: “I spent the last two years constructing a workflow that matches ten hours per week...they are forcing us to work less hours, which is a significant burden.”

The increase in student wages has been a challenge for various departments as they navigate how to compensate students fairly while working according to budget. Anzalone expressed how her experiences with the ARC throughout her college career have generally been positive and expressed hopes that the em-

[SEE ARC PAGE 7](#)

General assembly report 9/27/23

By MATTHEW BARESH
NEWS EDITOR

The most recent Student Government Association (SGA) General Assembly meeting took place on Sept. 27 and highlighted many topics including a new bike program for campus, postponement of the “Muhlenbonfire” event, the new club president support group and ended with the approval of new clubs.

“Six groups came to SGA under the newly formatted club approval system where a group of potential clubs presented to SGA at once,” explained Emma Ash ‘24. “Each club was given ten

minutes -- five minutes for the pitch and five for questions and vote.”

The six groups that presented before the SGA board include Analog Photography, Coloring on Chew Street, Berg Women in Business, Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA), Challah for Hunger and Chabad.

The Analog Photography Club was the first club approval of the night. Lorenzo Antigua ‘24 and Emilio Ramirez ‘24 touched on the importance of photography and its ability to capture the essence of life. The club’s mission statement is to educate students about how to use analog photography

and develop film. The students requested \$3500 for the club to purchase film cameras and bulk film to provide for their potential new members. There is a large expected turnout for the Analog Photography Club, with over 100 sign-ups during the Student Club Fair. The club was approved with a unanimous vote.

Coloring on Chew Street was the next club to be presented by Jem Berney ‘26, Jade Gambino ‘26 and Bailey Jones ‘26. The club’s mission statement was to create a safe space for students to express their creativity through coloring. Berney highlighted the importance that all students are welcomed,

even the worst artist, because the club aims for creating an inclusive environment. Coloring on Chew Street plans to be involved in the upcoming Fahy Fall Festival on Oct. 14 to hand out coloring pages to attendees. They requested \$400 from SGA for general supplies with plans to fundraise for the rest of the expenses. The student leaders have plans to collaborate with enACT to make coloring books from recycled materials. The club was approved with a unanimous vote.

Next was ‘Berg Women in Business, pitched by Abigail Scheidel ‘24. The goal of the club is to empower and support women pursuing careers in the

business field. The students touched on business being a primarily male-dominated field, so ‘Berg Women in Business would serve as a support group for female-identifying students and their business endeavors. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (DEI&B) Chair Bethany Qian ‘25 mentioned that they previously attended meetings before when the club was under a different board. They stopped attending the meetings because they felt the space was neither inclusive nor welcoming. Following this, Qian asked the students how they would make the space more inclusive. The

[SEE SGA PAGE 6](#)

‘Berg ranked top college for economic diversity

PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR MADDIE CILIENTO '25.

BY KATHERINE CONLON
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

On Sept. 8, Muhlenberg College was brought onto the national stage with a feature in The New York Times article “The College Access Index Returns.” This piece delves into the concept of economic diversity within the realm of higher education. In the wake of the Supreme Court’s 2023 decision repealing affirmative action, economic diversity is now seen by many as a way to continue the effort to increase racial diversity within college campuses. Muhlenberg College is one school with the goal of increasing economic diversity in its sights.

President Kathleen Harring, Ph.D., explained how the College’s association with The American Talent Initiative (ATI) has helped them achieve this commitment. Harring noted that “Muhlenberg joined the American Talent Initiative in 2018. Our current commitment is to enroll at least 20 percent Pell-eligible students in each first-year class. In 2021, I was asked to join the ATI national steering committee along with five other

presidents and chancellors from Princeton, Wellesley College, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the University of California-Merced and the University of Dayton.”

For context, Pell Grants are awarded to students who display significant financial need. The ATI describes itself as “a Bloomberg Philanthropies-supported collaboration between the Aspen Institute’s College Excellence Program, Ithaka S+R, and a growing alliance of colleges and universities dedicated to substantially expanding opportunity and access for low and moderate-income students.” In order to become a member institution, a school must have at least a 70 percent graduation rate. By 2025, the organization desires “at least 50,000 more high-achieving, low and moderate-income students,” according to Harring.

The New York Times’ goal in creating the index was to “help readers understand which colleges were already enrolling economically diverse classes before the Supreme Court decision—and therefore can serve as a model for others.” According to The Times,

Muhlenberg had one of the largest increases in Pell-eligible students, with the school moving from 8 percent in 2010-2011 to 20 percent in 2020-2021. Currently, 22 percent of the Muhlenberg student body is Pell-eligible.

Harring outlined the College’s initiative to increase the economic diversity of its student body saying, “We’ve deepened our relationships with community-based organizations and created targeted admissions programs that have allowed us to broaden and diversify the pool of prospective students. We’ve invested more in need-based aid. We added additional cohorts to the Emerging Leaders program.”

She continued noting, “In 2018, we founded a chapter of Alpha Alpha Alpha, the first-generation honor society, on campus—the fourth institution in the country to do so. Faculty and staff created new support systems, like the first generation student support network and the Graduate School Preparatory Program, to ensure that students from diverse backgrounds thrive and succeed.”

Harring explained that Muhlenberg was highlighted by Bloomberg Philanthropies



The front view of Haas.

being named an ATI High-Flyer institution. “We were one of only 28 institutions recognized by ATI as leaders in college access and success for low- and moderate-income students,” said Harring.

Describing her personal connection to the issue, Harring stated “My father was the first and only person in his family to attend college.

My siblings and I were taught the value of education through his experience. From that, I developed a deeper understanding of how a college education changes the lives of individual students but also the lives of their families for generations to come.”

FROM **MILE** PAGE 1

“The laundry room on my street is two blocks away from my MILE, and when I need to do laundry, I need to walk to the laundry room and back multiple times within the span of a few hours, no matter if it’s boiling hot outside, freezing cold, raining, snowing or icy. And because of how long it takes me to walk to the laundry room assigned to my MILE, by the time I come back from putting my clothes in the washing machine, I only have 15-20 minutes before I need to walk back to the laundry room to switch my clothes into the dryer.”

Silberman explained how the laundry rooms in Martin Luther (ML) and East are actually closer to his MILE.

“Every time I did laundry, I had someone let me into ML and I would spend a few hours doing work in their room while my laundry was being cleaned, and doing laundry in ML was great! ML is closer to my MILE than my MILE’s laundry room is, and every time I did laundry in ML, no matter what time of day or what day of the week, there were always multiple open machines for me to use.”

The laundry situation has required people to use any resources they can to get their clothes clean and their laundry done, whether it means finding access to a residence hall or bringing it home. Silberman is living in the same MILE, but no longer knows someone in ML or East and so he can no longer have the benefit of doing his laundry there. One specific story Silberman mentioned was comical in nature as none of the

machines were available for an entire day.

“One Tuesday in the middle of the fall 2022 semester, I really needed to do laundry. I only had one class on Tuesdays that semester, so after my class ended at 10:45 a.m., I picked up my laundry from my MILE and walked to the laundry room to put my clothes in the washing machine. When I got to the laundry room at about 11:00 a.m., both washing machines and both dryers were being used, and their cycles had just started a few minutes before I got there. I was disappointed and walked back to my MILE, deciding that I would try again a little later. About an hour and a half later, at about 12:30 p.m., I went back to the laundry room with my laundry, and again all four machines had just started their cycle! I tried again at about 2:00 p.m. after lunch, and again all four machines had just started their cycle! This kept going on for the rest of the day: I went back to the laundry room every hour and a half to two hours, and every single time I went, all four machines had just started their cycle! I checked one last time at about 9:30 p.m. that night, and had the same experience. Somehow over the course of an entire day from 11:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m., every single laundry machine in the MILE laundry room was being used, and I was never able to do laundry that day. At that point, I gave up on using the MILE laundry room, and for the rest of last year, both fall semester and spring semester, I refused to ever use the MILE laundry room again.”

Some people who prefer to do laundry at home live close to

campus, but other individuals are also waiting to do laundry until they return home for holidays and for breaks. Brianna Moyer ‘24 lives in a MILE, but transports her laundry to her home since she lives close by. “I go home to do laundry because I live close to campus and it’s more convenient to just go home and do it. A lot of times here the washers and dryers are full so it’s easy to just do it at home and not have to worry about that.”

When asked if there was any incentive that would motivate Moyer to do laundry on campus, she mentioned an unrealistic objective. “I’d love for there to be washers and dryers in all the MILEs but I know that’s a lot to ask for, so maybe if there were more machines in the communal areas I’d be more inclined to do my laundry here.”

An anonymous student shared a similar hope, “I think they should have machines in each apartment rather than one for an entire street. Two washers and two dryers is absolutely ridiculous for that many people in different houses.”

Graniero does not live close to campus, but she still transports some of her laundry back home. “I waited two weeks without doing laundry just because I knew I was going home and could do it then...If we are going to have to pay to do laundry, the least they could do is offer us machines that work to dry clothes.”

Regardless of the thoughts on the MILE laundry services, this is still a paid service and a basic need for residents. HRL continues to look after these spaces and provide changes for students, as seen in response

to Peters’ TikTok, but the practicality of these spaces are still in question.

“Washers and dryers are tested/inspected semesterly by our outside service provider to ensure they are working, but if students report issues in the meantime, a service call is made and our vendor comes and assesses the issue and schedules repairs,” stated HRL.

There are complaints from students about the dryers not working properly. Olivia Oberman ‘24 stated, “The dryers simply don’t work.”

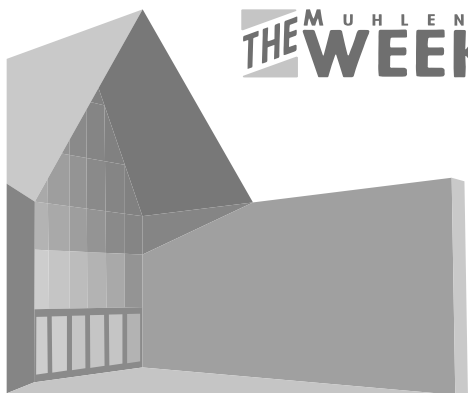
Graniero added, “On top of this, a general ‘Berg laundry problem is we are paying for washing and drying, and the drying only works like 50 percent of the time. Then you have to pay double to dry your clothes. If we are going to have to pay to do laundry, the least they could do is offer us machines that work to dry clothes.”

Peters concluded, “Overall I was impressed at the speed that housing got the issue resolved! I’m pleasantly surprised that my TikTok, which was me making a joke out of a slightly bad situation, actually resulted in action and change.”

One anonymous student shared, “As a tour guide who praises the Muhlenberg Independent Living Experience to prospective students and families, it is deeply upsetting to have been presented with a poor and unsafe laundry circumstance. The line I always shared on tours since freshman year, ‘as a landlord, Muhlenberg makes sure to look out for their students.’”

FROM **ARC** PAGE 3

ployees and department can work together to reward students for their work: “There’s never really been any concern up until this issue...I love doing this job, I wanted to be a learning assistant especially for [organic chemistry] because it was my learning assistants that helped me get through the class...Obviously, it would be nice if their budget could increase, [but] that is not something they have control over. So, I definitely think that David has done the best with what he’s been given...I think [the increase in student wages] was done with the greatest intentions, but I think the execution and the budgeting didn’t align.”



THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY

/ARTS & CULTURE

“You’ve got to start to love the world and know about the whole genius of the human race.”

-Vivienne Westwood

‘Berg celebrates Latine Heritage Month

BY SHAIYAN FEISAL
ASSISTANT A&C EDITOR

Latine Heritage month takes place from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15 and is a time to recognize the culture, heritage and contributions of Americans with cultures from the Caribbean, Central America, South America and Mexico. Comunidad, a student-led club for the Latine community, is celebrating with a series of special events over the course of the month.

Latine Heritage month started at ‘Berg with a “Warm Welcome Back” on Sept. 15. The event celebrated the start of the month with food, games and music around a fire pit at the Office of Multicultural Life (OML). Dia de Exaltón was another event held on Sept. 22. Exaltón is a reality television show where two teams, the “Contendientes” (Contenders) and the “Famosos” (Famous) compete six days a week in obstacle course races. Comunidad’s spin on this was an obstacle course day full of games and competitive fun.

On Oct. 6, Comunidad is collaborating with the Women of Color Collective



Comunidad’s Bonfire Event

(WCC) for ¡Bailando! They are going to present Bachata lessons with Ely Dance Studio. Bachata is a genre of dance and music that originated from the Dominican Republic in the 1960s. The music genre is a fusion of Merengue, Bolero and Son Cubano. It originally had a rhythmic guitar, an electric bass guitar, bongos and

güira, but Bachata music has evolved into a more electronic and modern style now. The dance is known for being romantic and having a syncopated rhythm. Bachata was originally danced from front to back, but it’s now danced from side to side. The hip action step is the most notable characteristic of this dance.

Lastly, on Oct. 12, there will be a “Charlamos” or “We Chat” event where Comunidad members can come together to learn about their fellow members’ experiences and learn how to embrace themselves as Latines. For the secretary of Comunidad, Adrián Padrón-Curet ‘26, Latine Heritage Month means “finding a sense of community between Latin American countries. There is a large population of people who are Hispanic and Latine here at Muhlenberg, but unfortunately, we are spread out, and many do not connect with each other.” In regards to what Comunidad has done for Latine Heritage month, Padrón-Curet stated that Comunidad’s goal is “to connect, learn and create friendships. We have different activities planned out that will help people become closer. We are happy to see that this has been working with our past activities since the e-board has become really close to new freshmen and other upper-class students.”

Lost in the Labyrinth

A review of “The Labyrinth of Desire”

BY EMMA HOWSON
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Going into the production, I already knew a little bit about the show, but I was still not expecting the whirlwind in which I was enveloped.

My professor for performance & society, Assistant Theatre Professor Leticia Robles-Moreno, Ph.D., is one of the co-directors of “The Labyrinth of Desire.” We read the script, an adaptation of Lope de Vega’s 1617 “La Prueba de los Ingenios” adapted by Caridad Svich, for class. So while I was excited to see the show, I didn’t think I would be surprised. I already knew the plot, after all (I was proven wrong).

Firstly, there was a pre-show in the Trexler Pavilion outside the Baker Theatre. “The Lovers,” a group of five actors that made up the ensemble of the play, explored the space and interacted with the audience. It was so much fun to watch them discover us and the world around them, especially considering “The Lovers” are a uniquely new Muhlenberg addition to the production. And let me tell you, I never expected to be thrilled when someone looked at me and

said, “It smells like rosemary!” I was not the only one delighted and intrigued by the pre-show either. Lupe Bueno-Ventura ‘27 noted, “Watching the Lovers just be in a romantic daze outside the theater was so entrancing and made me curious as to what I was about to see.”

Then, we were beckoned into the theater, and greeted by a magical world.

The play follows Florela, played by Jules Curtis ‘25, who was scorned by their paramour Alejandro, played by Samuel Roter ‘25. He promised to marry them but backed out in order to chase after the wealthy Laura, played by Desiree Oliver ‘25. Laura’s mother, the Duchess, played by Hannah Kulbitsky ‘24, is pressuring her to marry, as she cannot get her inheritance without doing so. Florela disguises herself as Diana and uses their intellect and charms to become Laura’s secretary. But love is in the air, and Florela finds more than they were looking for in Laura’s own charms. Alongside the main story is a cast of side characters who absolutely steal the show. Bryson Brunson ‘25, who played Ricardo, Florela’s best friend, was effortlessly hilarious, as

was Hannah Scarlatou ‘26, who played Paris, another of Laura’s suitors, and Adrián Padrón-Curet ‘26, who played Camacho, Alejandro’s right-hand man. Caitie Pagonis ‘24, who played Estacio, Paris’ right-hand, was endearing and incredibly enjoyable to watch. And Piper Ackerman ‘24, who played Finea, Laura’s best friend, was engaging and entertaining.

I was rather impressed with the work of all the principal actors. Their characters had much to grapple with emotionally, which was handled expertly by the actors. It was also great to see a nonbinary romantic lead in Florela. As a queer person myself, the unabashed queerness on display throughout the show was just beautiful.

The technical side of the show was also captivating. The lighting, which was ran by lighting designer Haley Brown, was gorgeous; at times it mimicked various pride flags which was an excellent detail. The costumes, which were under the work of costume designer Siena Zoë Allen, were also spectacular. I have work-study in the costume shop, so I already knew of their flamboyant beauty.

But it was something else to see them at work on stage. They reflected both the characters’ personalities and the stage they were at in their journey (and they were so pretty. Did I mention that?).

Tori Brady ‘25 shared her thoughts on the show stating, “The creativity with the costumes as well as the actors and their portrayal of these characters and adding their own elements to the show really made it a work of art and brought it to life.”

Not only did the show break the mold of what we traditionally think of as a romantic comedy, but its rehearsal process was also nontraditional. According to Robles-Moreno’s co-director Associate Theatre Professor Troy Dwyer, the rehearsals were “very student-led... The company introduced a method in which we’d talk through each scene together, then the directing team would leave the studio and the actors would craft a full draft of the scene. Later, [Robles-Moreno] and I, along with our Assistant Director Lacey Cataleta ‘26, would receive the draft and provide a response to it, and then the actors would make decisions

about how they wanted to apply that response, or not. It kept the ownership of the story, its voice, fully on the side of the people who’d actually be embodying it. And it placed the directing team as helpful outside eyes, advisors and consultants—not bosses or controllers.”

Robles-Moreno explained why she wanted to direct this show: “‘Labyrinth’ is special to me because it is full of hope and joy— a breath of fresh air for our community in the midst of troubled times.” Furthermore, she said, “I hope people think about love and desire as conduits for joyous encounters, about how we can always be true to ourselves when we embrace what sets us in motion, and about accepting and loving people for who they are, what they do and how they want to present themselves to the world. Also, I hope audiences realize that sometimes you don’t need to ‘understand’ something in order to feel it and appreciate it. The Lovers’ pre-show is all about sensing together, and imagining a brighter world.”

The world of “The Labyrinth of Desire” was indeed bright, and I wish I could return to it again.



Studios Spotlight

By EMMA NORTHROP
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Like many others experiencing a liberal arts education distinct to Muhlenberg, Shira Holtz ‘24 has reawakened old passions and found new ones during her four years here. She’s always been heavily involved in the arts, performing at the Play Group Theatre in White Plains, N.Y. before coming to college. Since attending Muhlenberg, she has played Martin in “A List,” Vera in “You Are Cordially Invited...” and Heller in “(&Medea).” Holtz has also participated in the Red Door Play Festival and “Move, Diverge, Advance,” amongst other things. While her previous concentration was exclusively musical theater, Holtz has rekindled her interest in dance beyond theater and developed new interests like directing, Shakespeare, solo performance and plays.

Holtz is directing a Muhlenberg Theatre Association Studio show titled “Nowhere Left to Go,” written by Katie Harris ‘24. This one-act play follows six mostly college-aged teenagers trapped in a cave they have never been to. As they try to break out, they may find it is not just the physical barrier they must escape, but themselves as well. The play explores human

“Nowhere Left to Go”

connection as strangers interact in dire straits.

“Nowhere Left to Go” is not Holtz’s first experience with directing, but it is decidedly different from the directing she’s done in the past. Last fall, Holtz, Madeline Burk ’23 and others created the Patchwork Theatre Festival, where Holtz associate directed “The Little Prince.” Holtz stated that “Working on that production made me realize that I really wanted to explore directing further.”

Working on “The Little Prince” is also how she made the connections to direct “Nowhere Left to Go.” Holtz described the process, mentioning that Harris “costume designed ‘The Little Prince’ last semester, which meant she was able to be in our rehearsal room frequently and got to see me work as a director. She really liked my process and we had discussions about my overall interests as a director, and she thought the show might be a good fit. I got to read it over and she suggested I propose it for Studios.”

Holtz noted that “Rehearsals as a director feel like they require a totally different part of my brain than rehearsals as an actor.” In developing her process, Holtz was heavily inspired by her Acting Process professor, Jamie McKittrick. Holtz said, “I was so lucky to get to work with her as my director when I played Heller in “(&Medea),” which was one of my favorite theatrical experiences ever. I’ve incorporated a lot of vocabulary

that I got from her into my directing, and am really inspired by the way that she holds space for actors’ creativity while still providing structure to the process. The way that she holds space and creates a safe and warm atmosphere is also something I strive to emulate in the spaces that I hold power in. Also, taking her 6 Viewpoints acting class has affected my interest in directing majorly. I’m particularly interested in the senses and in an audience’s perception of time and space. Time and space were the first two of the six viewpoints when we studied them, and I view theatrical work so differently because of that course.”

Studio shows give students the opportunities to approach all facets of theater, however, they differ greatly from a traditional performance format. Holtz noted that “There is a ton of work that goes into the Studios season, so much of which is done by the incredible Studios team. As far as the work that I put in as the director of an individual show within this festival, there are two main things: 1) do all of the work that goes into directing a show normally, and 2) collaborate and communicate with the Studios team and the other directors to ensure that we can successfully put on four shows in one weekend. There are so many things to factor in in order to do four completely different shows in one festival, like how can we make set pieces work in multiple shows, and how can we make



Pictured on the right, Shira Holtz ‘24 directs a scene for her upcoming Studios production.

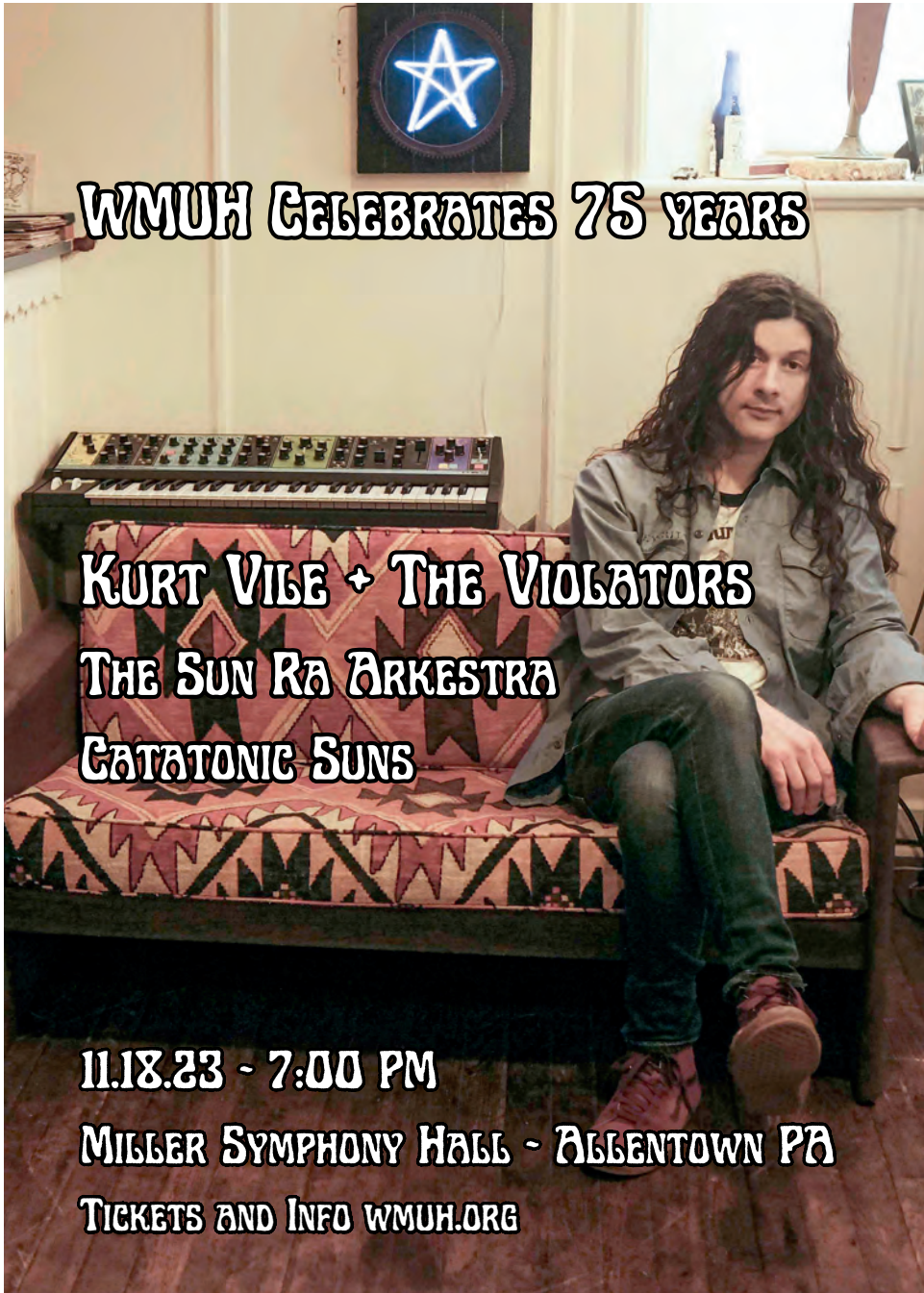
set-up and takedown of our set as short as possible? It is such a team effort and collaboration and compromise is absolutely crucial.”

Additionally, the seating for the Studio shows has been unique. Holtz shared, “Our seating for this production, which is alley style [or runway style], is not a seating arrangement I’ve ever worked with before. Luckily, I was informed of the possibility of this seating early on in the semester, but it’s interesting to direct scenes knowing that no matter what, someone in the audience will always have someone’s back to them.” She further emphasizes that this “isn’t a bad thing, but it’s certainly different from the ways my brain has been wired to view things through traditional proscenium theatre performances.”

Despite the challenges, Holtz is thrilled to be a part of the Studio shows. “I’m really excited to get to put on the world premiere of

this play. I think Katie’s writing is truly brilliant and I have such a wonderful cast bringing the story to life. It means a lot to get to be part of the team showing a new story to the world for the very first time!” She continued, “I always find that one of the most valuable things I get out of any performance experience is the connections I make with the people I work with. We’ve just begun rehearsals, but I can already tell that I’m working with an incredible group of people. I’m proud of bringing them together through this piece, and I’m proud to be telling this story.”

In addition to directing “Nowhere Left to Go,” Holtz will also be performing in Elizabeth Bergman’s piece in “In Motion” this spring. She also recently debuted an original work with Burk at the Scranton Fringe Festival titled “Daughters, Wives, Mothers.”



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Expression through fashion

By SHINAM HUSSAIN
ASSISTANT A&C EDITOR

The Allentown Art Museum presented an exhibit titled “Fashion as Experiment: the 60s” from May to Sept. of this year. I attended the exhibit on one of the last days before it was archived, and it was a thought-provoking and inspiring exhibit.

Upon walking into the exhibit, you are immediately met with mannequins adorned in different clothing styles, with each style accompanied by a plaque explaining its significance. In between marveling at the beauty of the colorful clothing, the intricate patterns, and the precise cut of the clothing, I was enamored with the reasoning behind these fashion statements. The exhibit’s purpose was to connect 1960s fashion statements to the political and social climate of that time. When browsing through the exhibit, there is a large sign informing art observers of the interesting history between fashion and politics.

The United States’ political climate in the 1960s was littered with social and political turmoil and change. Between the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, the anti-war protests that broke out in response to the Vietnam War and countercultural movements, the 1960s was a melting pot of political and social turning points, and the fashion was representative of the youth’s disillusionment with the state of society. This resulted in fashion circling around thrift shopping and handmade clothing in an attempt to undermine large clothing industries and the consumer culture these industries were pushing.

Fashion was a place where many could find community in the ‘60s. Clothing and accessories were utilized in empowering ways for certain people. In the exhibit, there was a dashiki on display, which is a colorful piece of clothing that is mostly worn in West Africa. In the ‘60s, dashikis were being worn by African Americans to symbolize the pride they held for

their identity.

Personal style and the way people can utilize fashion to express themselves and their identities have been present through all periods of time. Societal expectations of how certain people should dress have been seen to heavily impact the way many people style themselves, and this can be in the rigid binaries that have been enforced for “masculine” and “feminine” clothing. Throughout history, certain clothing styles have been marketed towards either men or women, and there has been a stigma created around people who experiment outside of these rigid binaries.

In the 1960s, experimenting outside of these societal boxes was seen in young men desiring to embrace adventurous fashion styles that would disrupt traditional masculine styles. This was seen in how young men began to wear bell bottom cut pants, which were previously marketed towards and worn dominantly by women, and they also began to grow their hair longer. Along with these stylistic choices, men also began to lean into clothing that was more form-fitting, instead of the baggy or boxy silhouettes that they were previously encouraged to wear, along with embracing colorful clothing pieces. In the exhibit, I saw many of these garments on display. There were a variety of mannequins clothed with different bell bottoms for observers to marvel at, providing the knowledge that these clothing pieces had a profound significance behind them. Young men’s pursuit to break away from traditionally masculine archetypes through fashion created a space for self-expression and possibilities that were unknown prior.

There was an outfit on display that was made up of bell bottom jeans and a floral shirt, with an explanation next to it that told us that the typical day in the life outfit was structured to branch out of conventional gendered styles. Prior to the late 1960s, you would not find men who wore colored or patterned shirts. It was stated that 90 percent of men’s shirts sold by major

manufacturer Kayser-Roth in 1961 were white. Not only was the print experimental, but the material of the shirt was satin with a stretchy fabric, which also raised a challenge to traditional gender norms.

Within the exhibit, there were a substantial amount of clothing pieces that were said to be influenced by non-Western cultures. This attire was adapted in the 60s by young men, again in an effort to distance themselves from traditional masculinity. There was a jacket on display with a flamboyant and patterned collar, which was inspired by traditional Indian garments that was worn by former prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru. This jacket was paired with silk scarves and pendants, which was an alternative to the standard sports coats and shirts that were considered masculine attire in the United States.

In the search to move away from traditional gender norms, women leaned into flowy dresses, that differed drastically from the streamlined hourglass silhouette seen in the previous decade. There was an influx of shorter skirts and flat shoes that moved away from cumbersome shapewear, which allowed women to feel freer in their style. Young women prioritized comfort and playful direction in the ‘60s, and these minimalist fashion choices were radical for their simplicity—women were wearing clothes for their own pleasure.

A worker at the museum, Sean O’Leary, gave his thoughts on the exhibit stating, “I’m not much of a clothing horse, but I thought the exhibit was really cool. The ‘60s were probably the first time clothing was used to represent rebellion, so harshly—at least not since the 1920s. The ‘60s brought back the use of fashion to retaliate from the government, and I think that’s really cool. We have a long way to go, but the ‘60s exemplified how fashion can be profound and utilized as a tool.”

Anna Hanley ‘25 expressed “It’s just really cool to see how fashion has progressed throughout the years and what fashion can represent. It’s



Allentown Art Museum’s Exhibit, ““Fashion as Experiment: the 60s.”

more than just putting clothes together, and can really be a reflection of self or can be used to make a political statement, which is an aspect of fashion you wouldn’t think of right away.”

The exhibit displayed various clothing pieces, all meant to signify the radical nature of fashion in the 1960s. With this, there was also an emphasis on treating clothing, accessories and anything that is attributed to personal style as an outlet for self expression and identity. The youth of the 1960s were breaking away from normative gender roles with their clothing, to symbolize their distance from American society, because they were so displeased with the state of the government. In this fashion statement, they were also experimenting with wearing what felt more authentic to them, instead of what fit a societal mold.

At the end of the exhibit, there was a bulletin board titled “What kind of clothes do you like to wear? What does your style say about you?” There was a board filled with drawings and notes

different people left to explain their personal style. There was a note felt by someone stating, “My style says I’m chill, but love a thrill.” Another note read, “Some days I’m a pirate, some days I’m a princess, some days I’m an artist.”

One note located at the top of the board captured the message of the exhibit and the beauty behind fashion and finding pieces and accessories that feel authentic to you, it expressed, “No matter your style, wear it with dignity.”

FROM **SGA** PAGE 3

students responded that they will “partner with Dr. Nagey in the business department” and will “meet more weekly” to plan club activities. The club was approved with a unanimous vote.

HOSA was then presented by Rikaya Cheaves ‘27. HOSA is a global student-led pre-professional organization that is endorsed by the United States Department of Education. The club aims to empower and support young aspiring health professionals. The club will offer community awards for the College, scholarships,

skill-building and shadowing medical professionals. The costs were determined to be varied depending on the locations and specificities of the events. Treasurer Evan Lipman ‘24 posed a question about how the club will differ from current health honors programs at the College. In response, the students explained that costs will range for the competitions. The club was approved with a varied vote.

Challah for Hunger, also known as MAZON (“food” or “substance” in Hebrew), was then pitched by Sophie Yellis

‘25. MAZON aims to develop community around the baking of challah, an early Jewish tradition and raise money to aid with hunger disparities. There was a chapter for this club in the past that was since disaffiliated, so Yellis’ goal was to reinstate a new chapter beginning this semester. The club was approved with a unanimous vote.

The last organization to be presented was Chabad by Sam Nulman ‘24. He had a group of participants in the assembly audience to support him in the pitch. Chabad was recently unable to maintain their off-

campus location due to financial struggles. Nulman stated that Chabad would need a few thousand dollars to support their endeavors. The money from SGA would go to Sabbath meals and speakers. Chabad would not need any other support other than financial as the Religious and Spiritual Life is closely involved with Chabad. SGA representatives expressed confusion about the difference between Chabad and Hillel on campus. Nulman responded that Hillel has a student board and a director that provides programming, while Chabad is

a family with home-made meals. Chabad plans to collaborate with Hillel to involve more students on campus. Chabad was approved with a varied vote.

A general applause from the audience and board of representatives concluded the meeting to celebrate the success of the new club approval process.

Additional reporting by Emma Ash ‘24, Lena Bromberg ‘25 and Felice Picchietti Cragin ‘25.

I went to a Hozier concert, *now I don't need therapy anymore*

By Lily Magoon
Op-Ed Editor

Me? An Op-Ed section editor using my section to enthuse about my interests for a thousand words? Never.

On Friday Sept. 22, I drove 5.5 hours up to Boston to see Hozier in his “Unreal, Uneath” album tour, and let me tell you it was worth every minute on the God-awful Merritt Parkway.

Friday was the first of two shows he played in Boston at the Leder Bank Pavilion; a large, tented outdoor amphitheater on the water. Could he be playing in full-on stadiums? Absolutely. But this venue fit the aesthetic of his music and his audience perfectly. Your average Hozier fan is going to be one or more of the following: an English Major, mentally ill, physically ill, Queer or a former emo teen. This group made for the chilliest merch line you’ve ever seen in your life.

That said, we were absolutely not chill once The Bog Father stepped onstage. After a short, but very cool, set by opener Madison Cunningham, the opening chords to “De Selby (Part 1)” — the first track on the new album — ushered him and his eight-piece band out, and we all lost our collective mind.

There wasn’t much time for that though, as he played straight through “De Selby” parts one and two before giving us any kind of introduction; all of one word spoken into the mic — “hello.” From there, he played two fan favorites from his self-titled first album back in 2014, “Jackie and Wilson,” and “From Eden.” Safe to say we were already pretty unwell.

After a slightly more substantial intro, in which he expressed his appreciation for Boston audiences in particular — the general populace of which would likely defect in a heartbeat if Ireland had any interest in claiming the city — he began the section that I would consider the horniest portion of the evening: “Francesca,” released as a single back in May, followed immediately by “To Be Alone” and “Dinner & Diatribes,” off his second album, “Wasteland, Baby.”

Graciously allowing us to collect ourselves after that lineup, he spent some time talking about the story of “I, Carrion (Icarian),” which he described as exploring Icarus’ fall from the sky if the feeling of falling had been so wonderful, that it left him in total denial of having died from it — anyone else feeling a little called out?

Hozier has always been one of

few artists who is widely considered to be better live, and if it wasn’t already obvious from the rest of his set, the sound of his lilting tenor on “I, Carrion (Icarian),”’s rich and eerie melody proved it unequivocally (and also makes me wonder what his producer even does after he records).

And if we weren’t already crying after that, he introduced “Cherry Wine” as one of the first songs he wrote and recorded, and sealed our fate by saying, “if you know it, I’d love to hear you sing it.”

He gave us another moment to collect ourselves after that, explaining the inspiration behind track 11 on the new album, “To Someone From A Warm Climate (Uiscefhuaraithe).” He said he came across the Irish Gaelic word, “Uiscefhuaraithe” much later in his life, despite learning Gaelic all through school. It’s a compound word that describes (as he put it) the coldness we feel when we pick up a wet stone that our body is able to recognize is cold because it’s wet. This is not the only tribute to Gaelic on “Unreal, Uneath,” as it is featured at the end of “De Selby (Part 1)” as well as being the subject of “Butchered Tongue,” which was not part of the setlist. This moment of appreciation of

the Irish language was especially meaningful in a place where so many people have an ancestral connection to the country, but very few lingering cultural ones. He even mentioned later in the show that he, “like all Irish people do,” had cousins in Boston who were there to see the show that night.

Next he returned to his second album, playing “Would That I,” and “Nina Cried Power,” which was originally recorded with Grammy-winning R&B and Gospel singer and civil rights activist, Mavis Staples. At this show, he featured Melissa McMillan (also on backup vocals and keys) on Staples’ part. “Someone New” was played next, and another band member, Kristen Rogers (vocals and percussion), was featured on “Damage Gets Done,” originally recorded for the new album with Brandi Carlile. It’s clear Hozier wants to prioritize the community aspect of his work, both in his willingness to feature other band members, and the fact that he tried to squeeze in individual thank-yous to as many of the 52 production team members as possible before the end of his set (often using their full names and where they were from).

“Almost (Sweet Music),” followed by “First Light” and “Eat

Your Young” from the new album rounded out the setlist, finally ending with “Take Me to Church” — and let me tell you, take us to church he did. Hair loose, hand raised like a priest blessing his congregation, Hozier’s performance of the now ten-year-old song left us cheering for an empty stage for a solid five minutes.

And because he’s not one to disappoint, he returned for the Encore/aftercare we all very much needed, playing “Like Real People Do,” “Unknown/Nth” and ending on “Work Song.”

I would’ve happily stood and watched Andy (as the drunk guy sitting next to us called him) stand and sing on a completely bare stage, but thanks to lighting and projection designer Steven Douglas in collaboration with Drew (another nickname from the drunk guy next to us), the audience got to be in emotional pain from the auditory aspects as well as the visual. Clips of music videos, gorgeous sunrises and space-scapes, trees, feathers and captivating light patterns played behind the band throughout the performance, leaving viewers overstimulated but still wanting more.

We walked out of the Pavilion feeling like years had been put back on our lives; like suddenly we had nothing to talk about with our therapists that week. We walked through the streets of Boston with nothing to say but “wow.”

ALBUM REVIEW

“The Rise and Fall of a Midwest Princess”

PHOTO COURTESY OF OF @CHAPPELLROAN ON INSTAGRAM

By Katherine Conlon
Editor-in-Chief

While everyone was buzzing about Olivia Rodrigo’s latest album and Taylor Swift’s new romance with NFL player Travis Kelce, an up-and-coming pop superstar was in the midst of releasing her debut album. On Sept. 22, Chappell Roan’s “The Rise and Fall of a Midwest Princess” completely captivated listeners.

Roan’s style incorporates all the best aspects of the pop legends that came before her. She possesses Lady Gaga’s boldness and vocal range, Elton John’s ‘70s flair, Taylor Swift’s lyricism and Olivia Rodrigo’s youthful spark. In fact, Rodrigo and Roan share a producer and co-writer, Dan Nigro. Nigro has developed a bit of a style himself, with “Sour,” “Guts” and “The Rise and Fall of a Midwest Princess” all containing satirical, showy and unabashedly juvenile moments. Nigro has attached himself to female artists who do not hold back in their exploration into the nuances of womanhood.

Roan’s album is undoubtedly a masterclass in one specific, niche genre: queer-cod-

ed club bangers. This album pumps out hit after hit, with hooks that will ruminate in your head for days after you first listen. “Red Wine Supernova” is a particular standout among the album’s many upbeat tunes. The bridge, specifically, uses Roan’s trademark sing/speaking technique that appears throughout the record. In a tongue-and-cheek moment, Roan chants, “Back at my house I got a California king/Okay, maybe it’s a twin bed and some roommates.”

Throughout the 14-track album, Roan takes the listener on her journey of sexual realization. In “Femininomenon” and “Super Graphic Ultra Modern Girl” she describes being disappointed by men time and time again and longing for something more than society’s stereotypical ideas of a woman’s duties. She sings wistfully, “You pretend to love his mother/Lying to your friends about how he’s such a goddamn good lover/Stuck in the suburbs, you’re folding his laundry.” When Roan sings about being with a female lover in these songs, brightness and exuberance returns to her voice. Listeners can’t help but become overwhelmed by Roan’s free

spiritedness as she belts “Telling secrets, there on the mattress/Wearing nothing but glitter and lashes/At every party, we’re the party.”

Described as the album’s “high point” by critics, “Casual” is a gut-wrenching piece that highlights Roan’s talent as a vocalist. In the song, Roan bitterly questions how her romantic partner is blind to the fact that their relationship is more than just a laid-back fling. She sings, “Knee deep in the passenger seat and you’re eating me out/Is it casual now?/Two weeks and your mom invites me to her house on Long Beach/Is it casual now?” Roan’s uncanny ability to write an earworm of a chorus is evident in this song.

“HOT TO GO!” is Roan’s ode to the world of cheerleading. It is a true “dance song,” which is rare in 2023. Choreographed moves accompany another stellar chorus. Roan doesn’t just create fun, danceable songs, she also ensures that they are lyrically clever. “I could be the one or your new addiction/It’s all in my head but I want non-fiction,” sings Roan.

“The Rise and Fall of a Midwest Princess” is the debut al-



Chappell Roan’s debut album cover.

bum of the year. Roan personifies all things campy, sparkly and downright fun. She doesn’t shy away from her over-the-top style but instead leans into it; Roan possesses a fearlessness that few other artists have. Don’t get it

twisted, Roan is not a one-trick pony. Her somber ballads ring as true as her vibrant, upbeat songs. So, do yourself a favor and give this album a listen. The only thing you’ll regret is not having known about it sooner.

Family ties

Getting to be a lifesaver.

By Jackie Aronie
Contributing Writer

My dad has always been a happy person. One of the happiest, I would say. That is not to say I’ve never seen him cry, yell or frown—which is not to say that I have never seen him angry. I do have a vivid memory of the only time he ever yelled at me; I was eight years old and I rudely slammed a drawer in his office. To this day I only ever close drawers very slowly.

He’s always been a “yes man” who never turned down an adventure, whether it be hiking in Arches National Park in the

snow, biking over the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco or even ziplining in Hawaii, all despite his immense fear of heights. He always RSVPed yes to my sister’s (Alex) and my sports events and theatrical performances, even when he knew either we would lose or they’d be excruciatingly boring and he was incredibly busy. He even agreed to coach my middle school basketball team when, throughout my entire basketball career, I only scored three baskets (Three. In the entire six years that I played. Pathetic, I know). He never said no to the opportunity to go camping with me on the weekends when I was in elementary school, even in the 30-degree winter. He never denied my requests to come with him to Saturday basketball with

his friends, despite children not being invited. He even always said yes to editing my atrocious essays throughout middle and high school (I will say it until the day I die, I am deeply sorry for subjecting him to that).

After spending 21 years of my life watching him smile, listening to his endless lectures about how important grit and resilience are, hearing him rant about how crucial positive thinking is to the perpetuation of happiness and experiencing him yelling at me every weekend for still being in bed after one in the afternoon because “there’s a whole world of fun things out there to do just waiting for me,”

watching him cry on the phone telling my sister and me he was diagnosed with Leukemia was a bit of a shock. We knew going in that there was an issue, so it was not entirely a surprise, but it caused some cognitive dissonance to see such a bubbly, show

tunes singing, excited-about-everything person be so worried and unsure.

After doing a lot of research and bombarding my parents with questions, my sister and I discovered he had been diagnosed with FLT3 Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML), which is a “particularly aggressive” form of Leukemia that is quite difficult to treat. First, I will admit there were some tears. My sister and I both went through a rapid-fire five stages of grief, minus the bargaining.

On Nov. 22, 2022, the same day he was officially diagnosed, he started high-dose chemo.

Watching the first round of chemo wreak havoc on Dad’s body was hard. I searched for a more eloquent word to describe how it felt, but no words in the dictionary came close to explaining it. It was just hard. From an outsider’s perspective (and probably from his perspec-

tive), he quickly seemed to develop every possible infection. He first contracted an infection in his stomach and subsequently another in his mouth. It felt like the whole process was happening in slow motion.

Pretty early on in the process, it became evident that Dad would need a stem cell transplant. Five of us were tested to potentially be donors. The testing itself to be a donor was not too invasive; it was just a blood test. My sister, my cousin and I were matched to be donors, and Johns Hopkins selected me. Nonetheless, it could have been Alex, and she and my cousins were incredibly brave for volunteering to be tested in the first place. She wanted to be his donor just as badly as I did, and for that, we all owe her a million thank-yous and immense respect.

About a month later, we began

SEE **FAMILY** PAGE 10



Aquarius (January 20 – February 18)
You will have a life-changing opportunity on Tuesday Oct. 3. Too bad this paper comes out on Thursday and you’ve already missed it.

Pisces (February 19 – March 20)
Sometimes all we can do is forgive and forget. And sometimes we can hide a raw fish in their vents. For legal reasons this is a joke. Unrelated: A whole Black Sea Bass is \$11.99/lb at Wegmans.

Aries (March 21 – April 19)
Listen, I know you’re looking for a fight, but STAY AWAY from the geese. Don’t start something you can’t finish.

Taurus (April 20 – May 20)
Technically you’ve existed as long as your mom has been alive: that’s why you feel like you’ve been alive forever.

Gemini (May 21 – June 20)
Your life might be a horror movie right now, but you can pick the soundtrack. Imagine “IT” with Britney Spears playing—hysterical.

Cancer (June 21 – July 22)
Eventually you’ve got to decide: in the boxed mac and cheese of life, are you gonna be the pasta or the cheese packet?

Leo (July 23 – August 22)
Breathe. Buy a coloring book and breathe.

Virgo (August 23 – September 22)
Anger is a secondary emotion, sadness is the primary one behind it, and cheese is the tertiary one that comes after. Have a cheese stick and calm down.

Libra (September 23 – October 22)
Be careful when fishing for compliments, you might catch a dead body instead. This is not a metaphor.

Scorpio (October 23 – November 21)
Your mental illness may be present in the club, but so is your ass. Keep up the good work.

Sagittarius (November 22 – December 21)
Have you lost your marbles, or have your marbles lost you?

Capricorn (December 22 – January 19)
There’s a cricket in your room that you can’t find. It might be a real cricket, but it also might be a “Tell-Tale Heart” situation.



Dominican Day Parade, New York City, August 13th, 2023

By Keanna Peña
Managing Editor

What is a flag?
A piece of paper tucked into your wallet?
A strip of fabric that hangs proudly on your wall?
The front dash of your car?
Or is it the kind of fabric that you’ve never touched
Before and for a lifetime
Didn’t even recognize
My flag is one that I’ve never owned
Not really
Not until I bought one for 10 dollars
On the street
From a woman who could’ve been my grandmother
My fumbling Spanglish the only proof
Of my heritage

When I got out the station
I saw so many people
In red blue white
With hair like mine but not mine
Skin like mine but not mine
Spanish like mine but not mine
And as their eyes glazed past me
I thought
I’m one of you
Can you see it?

From passing floats
The bursts of merengue and dembow sang to me
To wrap the red blue white around my shoulders
Feel its weight for the first time
And I grabbed onto each end like a girl
Who doesn’t know what to do with her hands

And then I danced.
And suddenly these people
With their hair like mine and not mine
Skin like mine and not mine
Spanish like mine and not mine
Were my people
I didn’t realize I had people.
And my people are beautiful.
They’re so fucking beautiful
And I’m so fucking devastated
That I never knew
They didn’t tell me
What this flag tied me to
Who this flag tied me to
That I had a claim to this flag at all
And I fall

And it catches me
Rooting me to a homeland
I’m beginning to call home

Cross country teams shine at Paul Short Run

By PENELOPE SCHNEIDER
ROOKIE WRITER

The Muhlenberg cross country teams showcased their grit and determination as they took on the challenging Paul Short Run at Lehigh University this past weekend. This renowned event, one of the nation’s largest cross country meets, drew teams from 25 different states, with participants traveling from as far away as California, Utah and North Dakota. However, what made this year’s race particularly memorable was the treacherous course conditions including the mud and wet sluggishness of the terrain.

Despite the conditions, David Ludwig ‘26 prevailed. Ludwig, with determination, clocked in a personal best time of 27:50. His remarkable performance included shaving an impressive 54 seconds off his previous record at Lehigh’s course. In a career-defining moment, Ludwig crossed the finish line as the first Mule, securing an exciting milestone in his collegiate running journey.

Adding to the excitement, Raam Ravishankar ‘27 continued his impressive rookie streak by consistently ranking among Muhlenberg’s top performers. The dynamic trio of Mason Tran ‘25, Matthew Hajel ‘26 and David Seel ‘27 rounded out the top five

PHOTOS BY JEM BERNEY ‘26



Cross country team at the Paul Short Run.



for the men’s team, solidifying Muhlenberg’s presence in the race.

The women’s team dually showcased their standout talents. Captain Caiti Kinnear ‘24 led the way once again, marking her fourth consecutive meet as the top performer for the Mules. Kinnear’s consistency has been a source of inspiration for her teammates throughout the season. Matching her efforts, Maggie Holderith ‘27, Captain Lauren House ‘25, Hadley DeVarennes ‘25 and Ellen Maguire ‘25, completed the Mules’ formidable top five.

Kinnear states, “Our team has been practicing since the summer to get ready for races like this one. We’ve been practicing six days a week for preparation, including some track workouts, long runs and additional training like core and med balls.” With preparation they aim to improve individual personal records (PRs) in upcoming races, as well as place higher in their conference meet previous to last year.

The Muhlenberg cross country teams’ performance at the Paul Short Run is a testament to their dedication, resilience and

unwavering commitment to the sport. Despite the challenging course conditions and fierce competition from across the nation, these athletes have once again proven that they are a force to be reckoned with in the world of collegiate cross country.

Come to the next cross country meet at Rowan University on Oct. 14, and see for yourself what the cross country Mules can accomplish.

FROM **FAMILY** PAGE 9

pre-testing for the transplant process which consisted of a bunch of meetings with nurses and doctors and many blood tests and screenings. The testing did not go as well as we had anticipated, so we were a little bit worried about the actual transplant itself, but we were assured that all would be fine and that we had nothing to worry about. A big thank you to Johns Hopkins nurses for all being so reassuring and helpful when everything felt like it was going wrong.

On Mar. 12, 2023, I began giving myself the pre-transplant injections of filgrastim (Neupogen), which is a drug designed to increase the normally small number of stem cells in your blood. It has plenty of nasty side effects and was no walk on the beach, but the unkillable optimism of my Dad came in handy. He is much more persistent, smiley and encouraging than me, and never fails to cheer me on to help me keep going. Another big thank-you to my mom who learned how to do the shots with me and even did one of them for me, sat with me every single time I gave myself an injection, and stayed with me throughout the entire multi-hour transplant. She also took care of me the entire time and has been there throughout every second of Dad’s treatment process. She wins both Wife and Mother of the Year.

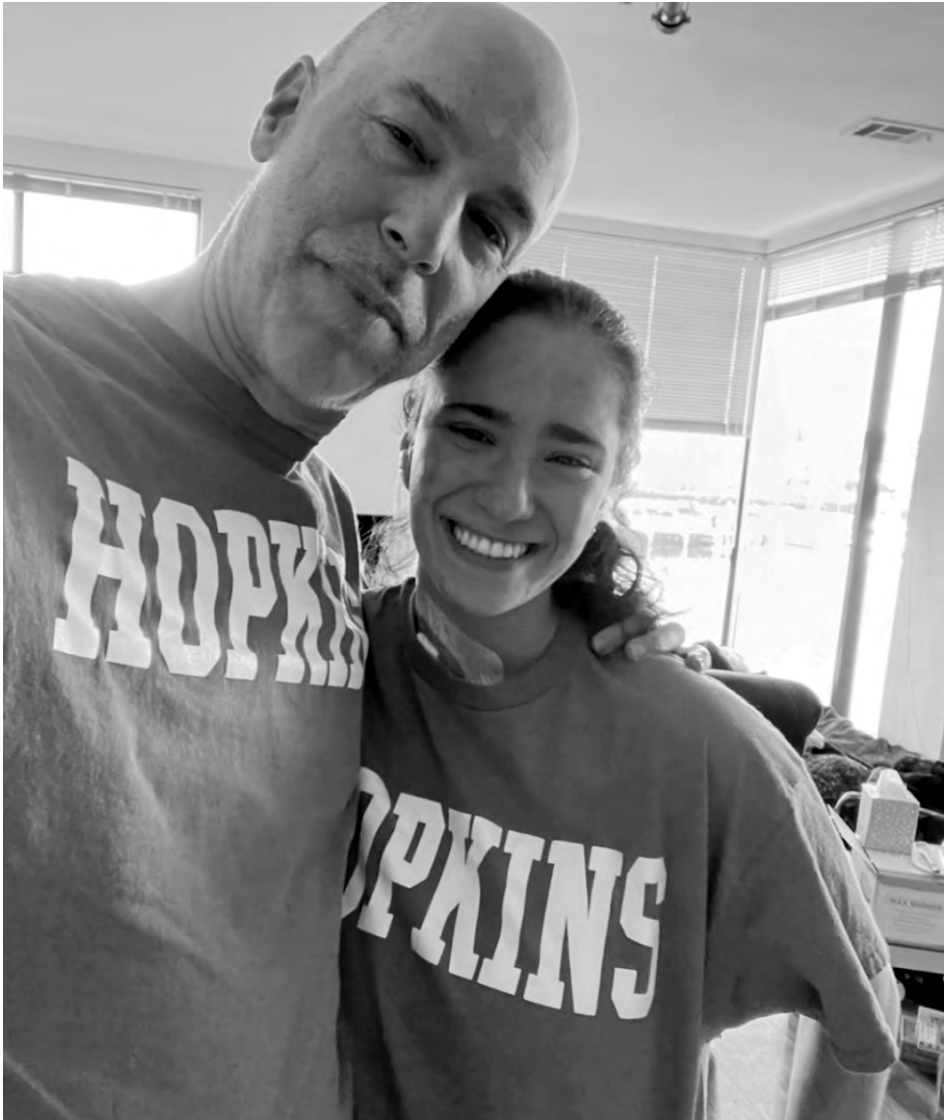
On Mar. 16, 2023, at 8:00 a.m., we began the transplant process. Bright and early they “twilighted” me, inserted a central line into my neck, woke me back

up, and began the six-hour process. They stocked me up on Tums to preserve my calcium levels, made sure I was hydrating and gave me tons of warm blankets so I wouldn’t be freezing while the machine cycled and separated my entire stock of blood through it seven different times (science is wild, right?!). They then, after completing the entire collection, removed the catheter (I was awake and un-medicated for that portion of the transplant... would not recommend that to my worst enemy...), and then sent me home to recover under the care of Mom.

On Mar. 17, 2023 (we all wore green to the hospital, don’t worry), Dad began his side of the transplant. As a result, he is now in remission!

In the end, the transplant was one of the bravest things I’ve ever done, but also the best decision I have ever made, and I would not change it even if offered millions of dollars (and that is saying something, since I have no money). Thank you, Dad, for instilling in me the courage it took to save your life. I guess all that hard work you put into being a family man paid off. Curse you for making me promise when I was little to always be your best friend. Thank you Mom for everything. You are a real-life superhero. Thank you to Alex and my cousins for being brave enough to even try. Thank you Johns Hopkins for helping save my dad.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JACKIE ARONIE ‘24



Jackie Aronie ‘24 and her dad pictured above.

Volleyball battles the Bullets

PHOTO BY KIRA BRETSKY '27.

Muhlenberg volleyball opened conference action by playing Gettysburg to a narrow defeat.

By EVAN SCHLOTTERBECK
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Under the spotlights of Memorial Hall, in front of loads of fans and relatives, and on the imposing gray and black logo, the Muhlenberg volleyball team (MVB) competed in their opening Centennial Conference matchup against the Gettysburg Bullets on Friday, Sept. 29.

The Mules fell to the Bullets 3-1, winning the second set after dropping the first and unable to capitalize in the third and fourth sets. Every point was decided fiercely by both teams, with neither wanting to give up an inch. The game had its ebbs and flows, but the team that dominated the net seemed to have the upper hand at any point in the match. The Mules found their success by complementing net control with covering the short hits well, forcing Gettysburg to hit toward the back of the court, generating many unforced errors from the Bullets.

When asked about the match, outside hitter Esmae Oehler '25 commented, "Our team has been doing a really good job of terminating off of serve receive, and defensively, we have been really scrappy and give all effort in the back row." She continued by emphasizing aspects the team wants to work on. "We really want to work on our mental toughness when we are in difficult and high-pressure situations on the court. Offensively, we want to work on being efficient and limiting our errors."

Effort in the trenches and sacrificing the highlight reel plays for nitty-gritty work has been a staple for this Muhlenberg volleyball group. "Our team has been very effective on defense this year," explained Christina Marcin '26. "Everyone puts in so much effort in the back row and it shows on the court and the scoreboard. Not only has our back row been on fire, but our blocking this year has made a huge difference in our previous games and will continue to set us apart from other teams in our conference."

This defeat aside, the Mules have started their season well, going into their next conference matchup at 10-5 as of Sept. 30, with the intangible coherence between players shining: "Our team chemistry is off the charts. We are a tight group, and I think this year we have so many leaders on the team which has been a huge part of our success. It's



The women's volleyball team passes the ball.

difficult to lose, especially when you believe you can win. But I can't wait to see how we overcome this obstacle and respond to the challenge," said Oehler.

Marcin echoed a similar sentiment: "The chemistry on this team is one of my favorite things about MVB. We're all so supportive and really want the best for our teammates on and off the court. It's unbelievably fun to play with these girls, and I can't wait to get deeper into conference play with them." The

squad is eager to build upon the momentum from earlier victories and use the low moments to grow together.

One goal for the team this year is to improve their play-off seeding from last year and avenge their first-round exit. The Centennial Conference is one of the best in Division III, and the Mules are excited for the road ahead after taking a strong Gettysburg team to tight four sets. "Conference play by nature is a little higher pressure

than regular play," said Oehler. "It feels really good to be back in conference play. I can't wait to see our team step up to tough competition. I wholeheartedly believe that this team is destined for greatness."

The Mules will follow their match against Ursinus by traveling to Baltimore, Md., to take on defending champions Johns Hopkins on Saturday, Oct. 7.



By ADDISON STAR
ROOKIE WRITER

Chiefs fans rejoice! Your players just became all the more valuable, and if you have a non-football-friend who likes Taylor Swift, then you've got someone to watch the game with next Sunday. For this fantasy football participant, whose knowledge of the Chiefs consisted of the fact that they won the Superbowl last year, Arrowhead Stadium just became more interesting. Just in case you've been living under a rock, pop sensation Swift has just launched her relationship with your favorite tight end, Travis Kelce. Impressive in his own right, Kelce is a phenomenal choice for any fantasy manager. Two weeks ago, Kelce brought in 19.9 points, which is much better than my own tight end, Sam LaPorta (Lions) who busted (did not gain the amount of points projected) this past week. LaPorta came into this week with a projected score of 10.7, but only managed to rack up 9.6 during Thursday night's game against the Green Bay Packers,

which I did watch. I can confirm that Swiftie fever has taken over when it comes to the National Football League (NFL), and that there is at least one die-hard Swift fan who watched the Jets vs. Chiefs, despite a total apathy toward football.

In other news, those who, like me, are playing the long game when it comes to Austin Ekeler, running back for the Los Angeles Chargers, might have been disappointed when Ekeler didn't play this past week. Ekeler scored 26.4 points during week one and on the surface would be an asset to any manager. However, he sprained his ankle during that first game and has had me on the edge of my seat ever since. I was hoping for a week three comeback story but unfortunately, it seems like the Chargers have decided to keep him on the bench until after their bye week, week four (A bye week is a predetermined week where a team doesn't play. Each team gets one per season, giving the players and coaches a chance to rest and regroup). A smart move on their part, but not so fun for

managers who wanted to see him on the field, myself included.

Lastly, it has come to my attention that I need a football team to support. I am looking to become a die-hard fan and since my family doesn't root for any teams, anything is up for grabs. A New York native, I'm thinking that the Giants or Jets might be a good pick, but since going to school in Pa., the Eagles are a contender. There are 32 teams in the NFL, so anything is up for grabs. I am looking for a team that has cute merch, because game day attire needs to be fashionable as well as effective in displaying how much I love my new team. Suggestions are always welcome.

FEATURED SPORTS PHOTO:



'Berg Tennis team showcases their skills.

PHOTO BY KIRA BRETSKY '27.

THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY / SPORTS

PHOTO BY KIRA BRETSKY '27.



‘Berg vs. ‘Burg

By DYLAN ROSENBLATT
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

The “Berg versus ‘Burg” rivalry was on full display these past two weekends as there were four matchups in which Gettysburg teams traveled to Allentown to face off against the Mules.

The rivalry began with a field hockey matchup on Sept. 23, which was Muhlenberg’s first in-conference field hockey game of the season. Over the past couple of seasons, the Mules have had the upper hand against the Bullets in field hockey, as they have won their last two matchups. Fortunately, the Mules were able to keep their hot streak versus the Bullets alive as they won 2-1 and started this year’s “Berg versus Burg” rivalry with a win.

Last weekend there were three “Berg versus ‘Burg” matchups, Muhlenberg’s 10-4 volleyball team took on Gettysburg Friday night, in both of their first Centennial Conference games of the season. In recent years Gettysburg has had the Mules’ number in volleyball, as Muhlenberg has not won a match – let alone a set – versus them since 2018. Unfortunately, Gettysburg was able to push

their win streak to four games against Muhlenberg, winning 3-1. However, despite losing, there was definitely improvement from prior years as the Mules won one set, and almost a second in overtime.

As of Oct. 4, the team currently sits at an overall record of 10-5. Their next game is this Saturday where they take on Johns Hopkins, the reigning Centennial Conference champions.

On Saturday, Sept. 30, both soccer teams went up against Gettysburg as well, with the women’s game kicking off at 4 p.m. and the men’s starting directly after at 7 p.m. Going into the game, the women were looking to end their four-game losing streak as recently it’s been a struggle for them to find a win. When looking at the women’s soccer “Berg versus ‘Burg” rivalry, it’s been very competitive, as the teams have tied in three of their four past matchups coming into this weekend. Unfortunately, the women’s team was unable to come away with the victory in this one as they lost a tight one, 0-1.

Despite the loss, it was a com-

petitive game and the team knows that their record does not reflect how they’ve been playing. “I think a major positive was that everyone’s energy and competitiveness were radiating from one another. Our team motto ‘No FEAR (Family-Energy-Accountability-Resilience)’ reminded us every minute of the game was ours and could change. We recognized our energy and hard-fought battle at the end of the game and made the commitment to use that momentum in

“It’s a testament to all the hard work we put in during the season...”

our next game. Also, our other core value, resilience, was an amazing positive in this game,” said Lexi Sipos ‘24.

Sipos continued: “For our upcoming matches, we are not let down. If anything, this pushes us forward to work harder in film and on the field, keep being competitive with each other at prac-

tice and never forget that we’re in this together. Yesterday’s game was also our mental health awareness game, and we know leaning on each other now more than ever will only build us up.”

Unless any of the teams face off against one another in the playoffs, the fall 2023 “Berg versus ‘Burg” rivalry concluded with the men’s soccer game. Coming into the game, the Mules men’s team hadn’t lost a game since their first matchup of the season, and held a record of 6-1-1.

Days before this game, the Mules beat Haverford 3-0 in their first game as a nationally ranked team, as they were ranked 22 in the nation in the most recent Division III national rankings poll. Last time these teams faced off was in the first round of the 2022 Centennial Conference playoffs, where the Mules defeated the Bullets 1-0. Unlike their last matchup, which was a close game to the end, the Mules demolished them this time around, winning 5-1 led by a hat-trick from graduate senior Tay Akdag ‘24.

The team will likely move up in the national rankings following their easy win against the

Bullets, and seem to be much improved from last season despite them winning the Centennial Conference championship last year. “I think we’ve been able to use last season’s success as a stepping stone to take it to the next level this year. In comparison to last year, we’ve been able to turn some close games into wins when they might have ended in ties or losses last year. It’s a testament to all the hard work we put in during the off-season and throughout the season so far. We’ve also added a couple transfers and freshmen who have come in and right away contributed to the team’s success,” said Captain Kevin Adams ‘25.


Both soccer teams travel to Lancaster this Saturday to go up against the Franklin & Marshall Diplomats in an in-conference doubleheader.

Coming up this week in

SPORTS

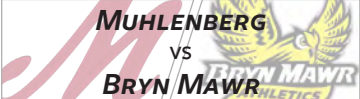
Oct. 5 - Oct. 11

Football




Sat, Oct. 7 @ 2:00 p.m.
Scotty Wood Stadium

Women’s Soccer




Wed, Oct. 11 @ 7:00 p.m.
Varsity Field

Volleyball



Wed, Oct. 11 @ 7:00 p.m.
Memorial Hall

Field Hockey



Wed, Oct. 11 @ 7:00 p.m.
Scotty Wood Stadium

Abandoning abroad

Abrupt changes within the Office of Global Education



Photo by Ayden Levine '23.

By KEANNA PEÑA
MANAGING EDITOR

The opportunity to study abroad is often discussed as a key Muhlenberg experience by tour guides. In fact, Bryan Guzman '26 says that's one of the main reasons he came to Muhlenberg. But now that he's here and planning to travel, he says working with the study abroad office has been disappointing.

The Office of Global Education, or the study abroad office as it's more commonly referenced, experienced a faculty reset post-COVID when Donna

Kish-Goodling, Ph.D., retired as director of the Office in 2022, and Monija Amani, Ed.D, took her place. Sophie Goodfellow '17 also joined the Office of Global Education in 2022, as global education program specialist.

However, after a year and a half, Amani abruptly resigned on Oct. 4. Goodfellow also announced that she is resigning from her position, effective Oct. 18 and will be working as assistant director of international affairs at Haverford College, PA. With the sudden resignation of the majority of the Global Education staff, and a lack of an

explanation from the College, students are anxious about what this means for their upcoming semesters abroad, their abroad experiences and the study abroad program itself.

Hannah Watanabe '25, who is studying abroad this upcoming spring, shared that this situation is "definitely making me way more stressed out. I haven't been fully confirmed for my study abroad next semester and I'm worried that if I'm missing any documents, I won't be able to submit them because of everything that's going on in our Global Education Office."

Leading up to Amani's resignation, information sessions pertaining to study abroad programs such as those in Africa, the British Isles and Oceania were canceled, along with individual meetings scheduled with Amani for spring 2024 study abroad students.

Provost Laura Furge, Ph.D., issued an official statement on Oct. 5 informing the student body that Kish-Goodling would return to campus from retirement to serve as interim dean of global education beginning on Monday, Oct. 9. Furge's email did not acknowledge Am-

ani's nor Goodfellow's resignation. Furge added that Ranajoy Ray-Chaudhuri, Ph.D., and Trevor Knox, Ph.D., both former faculty fellows in Global Education and professors in the accounting and economics department, will return to the Office of Global Education to assist students studying abroad in the spring.

While this is a sudden and abrupt change, Furge emphasized that "study abroad is still fully on. We have about 104 students who are planning to go in the spring and we do hope they will all still go... having gone to study abroad myself, I hope that no one misses that opportunity."

And while many agree that studying abroad is a wonderful opportunity, some Muhlenberg students have had a difficult time working with the Office of Global Education.

Gnama Hartney '24 studied abroad last spring in France. "I found that while applying to my host institution and going through the visa process, the Office of Global Ed[ucation] was not helpful in any means. They were late sending in needed documents for me to be accepted to the program. They gave very little information on how to apply for the visa and what documentation I needed. I basically had to figure it out myself and relied on the host institution to answer

[SEE **ABROAD** PAGE 4](#)

Students reflect on Israel-Palestine conflict

By MAX MAKOVSKY
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

In the early hours of the morning on Oct. 7, militants affiliated with Hamas launched an incursion into Israeli territory under heavy rocket fire and occupied several small towns. Israel has retaliated by prohibiting the movement of goods and people in and out of Gaza and launching thousands of airstrikes. Here at Muhlenberg, emotions have been running high ever since. Thousands of Israelis, Palestinians and foreign nationals have lost their lives and livelihoods since that day with no end in sight. It's impossible to detail the full impact of this war in just one article. Many students at Muhlenberg have direct connections to the conflict, and many have been struggling to process

their thoughts amid clashing narratives.

Muhlenberg is known for its large Jewish population, and many students have friends and family in Israel including Or-El Ankori '25. She recounted how she was celebrating the Jewish holiday of Simchat Torah on Oct. 7, with her extended family, all of whom are Israeli. With a population of just over nine million people, most Israelis know at least one person who had been affected by the incursions. Ankori mentioned that in addition to having family in Sderot, one of the hardest hit communities just north of the Gaza strip, she has a direct connection with someone serving in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).

Wren Daburah '25, a Palestinian-American student, noted how taxing the outbreak of this war has been on her mental health. "I almost feel guilty going to class and being a student working towards my future right now while those in the thick of it don't even know if they will live to

take their next steps." As images of destruction flood international news and social media, students have had to grapple with the privileges of living in the West while family, friends and loved ones take shelter from munitions in Israel and Gaza.

Despite the shocked reaction from within Israel and throughout international media, some students perceived the attacks by Hamas to be expected. "October 7 was no surprise to me. Palestinians have been degraded over these past 75 years and it's no surprise that people are fighting back Israel's oppressive apartheid," said Shajnin Howlader '27. "It's hard to continue on with my day without this pain I have been carrying for a long time, more intensified these past few days."

Muhlenberg students hold vastly different positions on the reaction of the wider student community in response to the war in Gaza. Daburah mentioned that as a Palestinian, it has been difficult for

her to find a safe space to reflect. "I admire how much the Jewish student body has come together to reflect and support one another in a safe space but right now I feel like the oddball in this community because I have yet to find that support group setting for my people on this campus because we are so few. There is always this underlying fear for me voicing my identity because of the false association that the flag of my people represents Hamas, though that is a false generalization of a population just because of an extremist group." Furthermore, an anonymous Jewish student who identifies as "not pro-Israel," stated that "it is a horrible time to be a Muhlenberg student right now... If I express my anger about Israel's actions I am seen as an antisemite and will be socially ostracized."

Similarly, Howlader criticized the lack of resources available to Palestinian stu-

[SEE **STUDENTS** PAGE 3](#)

Arts & Culture

In this issue, the Artist Spotlight features Molly Layden '24.

Campus Voices

Megan Hansen '26 discusses the WGA strike's effects on students in the arts.

Sports

The introduction of female non-kickers into college football

THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY

Serving the Muhlenberg College Community since 1883

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CAMPUS SAFETY NOTES

10/3/23

Alcohol Violation—Report of alcohol violation, found empty alcohol bottle, unknown to whom item belongings, bottle brought to Campus Safety and destroyed.

10/4/23

Injured Student—Report of injured student on the front drive, MC EMS responded, student transported to hospital, no further incident.
Injured Student—Report of injured student in Life Sports Center, MC EMS responded, student transported to hospital, no further incident.

10/9/23

Suspicious Person—Report of suspicious person in Robertson Hall, individual spoken to and left area.
Assist Outside Agency—Report of individual from previous call, Allentown PD responded, Allentown EMS responded and transported individual to hospital.
Fire Drills—Fire drill conducted in Seegers.

10/10/23

Sick Student—Report of sick student in Robertson Hall, student transported to hospital by Campus Safety.
Fire Drills—Fire drill conducted on Chew Street.
Fire Drills—Fire drill conducted on N 23rd St.
Fire Drills—Fire drill conducted at Martin Luther Hall.
Fire Drills—Fire drill conducted on Leh Street.
Fire Drills—Fire drill conducted on N 22nd St.
Fire Drills—Fire drill conducted at the Village.

‘Berg participates in the Healthy Minds Study

The College is participating in the study for a second year.

By MATTHEW KLINGER
News Editor

On Oct. 2, students woke up to find a link to the Healthy Minds Study survey in their inboxes. Allison Williams, Dean of Students, in an email to the student body on Sept. 9, stated that the goal of the study is to use the resulting data “to improve our mental health policies and programs, to better understand the state of our students well-being and to inform future mental health and wellness programs and policies.” Michele Paules, Director of Student Support Services, organized Muhlenberg’s partnership with the study and is overseeing this year’s survey. To incentivize students to complete the survey, respondents will be entered to win a number of different prizes, some available to students at all of the institutions participating in the study, and others exclusive to Muhlenberg. The prizes which all students are eligible for include one of two \$500 awards and ten \$100 ones. For the Muhlenberg-exclusive prizes, students will be entered to receive one of ten \$50 visa gift cards.

According to the Healthy Minds website, the study was first created by researchers at the University of Michigan in 2007 and provides colleges and

universities with a “detailed look at the prevalence of mental health outcomes, knowledge and attitudes about mental health and service utilization.” In addition, the study “emphasizes understanding help-seeking behavior, examining stigma, knowledge and other potential barriers to mental health service utilization.” The survey is designed to take about thirty minutes to complete and includes a number of different questions ranging from demographics and upbringing to diagnostic questions for various mental health conditions. Such conditions include depression, anxiety and numerous eating disorders. Because of those various diagnostic questions, students are given the option to receive a diagnostic report

“I’m glad that the College is open to criticism and that they are trying to improve.”
Esther Klinger ‘25

of their answers in order to have a better understanding of their mental health and receive help should they need it. This is an important tool considering the prevalence of mental illnesses among college students: according to Paules, last year’s survey revealed that 44 percent of students nationwide were found to have depression, and 37 percent of students were found to have anxiety.

Williams elaborated on Muhlenberg’s participation in the study, detailing that “it is all part of a four year grant we have with the JED Foundation... this assessment is used to the beginning

and end of the grant to determine areas of growth and change in regards to the student body’s knowledge and feelings about these critical topics.” Following the first study, the administration created a specialized group on campus to review the results and work “diligently to develop and begin to implement a set of strategies to enhance the College’s work in [the] area [of mental health],” Williams explained. For example, following the conclusion of the survey last year, the task force implemented new mental health awareness and support training that all faculty, staff and students are encouraged to complete. Following the results of this year’s survey, new policies and strategies will be considered to support and improve the mental health of students on campus.

Overall, students who took the survey liked it. Esther Klinger ‘25, who is a public health major, stated that “from an epidemiology standpoint, it is a good thing. However, because it is self-reporting, there is likely to be a large bias in the data. For example, those who have severe depression might be less willing to fill out the survey, skewing the data. I thought the questions they asked were pretty good, though I wished they had asked more questions related to eating disorders and focused slightly less on depression and anxiety. Overall, I think it is a good study and I’m glad that the College is open to criticism and that they are trying to improve.”

Max Gorman ‘26 also had a positive view of the study. “It was definitely something that would be beneficial for the school to have,” Gorman described. “I

PHOTO BY JEM BERNEY ‘26.



Michele Paules, the organizer of the Healthy Minds Study.

think that the school advertises a lot that they are pro mental health help, but they do not always do a lot to actually follow through with that sentiment. [For that reason], I think it is helpful data for the school to have.”



“MAP”ing out students’ college goals

By HARRY GLICKLIN
COPY EDITOR

In Dec. 2022, an Arts and Sciences study was conducted providing Muhlenberg faculty with feedback on how best to support students at the College. The study encouraged the administration to “think about ways to further help students make their impact, offer a balanced experience of challenge and support, and further deepen students’ overall sense of belonging,” says Associate Dean of Students Courtney Stephens. Additionally, with new curriculum changes and initiatives by the Career Center, they “wanted to think about ways that [they] could tie all of those things together for students in a powerful way.” Thus, a three-tiered coaching model was created.

This semester, all first-year students were matched with a designated member of the Career Center staff, an administrative staff member to serve as their “life coach” and a member of the faculty as their traditional academic advisor. Students were connected with their coaches through their Personal and Professional Development (PPD) courses. According to Stephens, “The Career Center staff teaches one of the weeks of PPD 050 to help demystify the career development process, as well

as talk more about the many resources and opportunities the Career Center has for first-year students.” Students are also required to meet with this staff member once during the semester through an appointment made with the Career Center. “However, after their first required meeting, they can choose any member of the Career Center team to work with for future appointments,” added Assistant Director of Career Coaching & Education Sara Weidner.

In their presentations to PPD classes, Career Center staff members discuss the Muhlenberg Action Plan (MAP). Per the Career Center website, “The Muhlenberg Action Plan (MAP) is a unique program that allows students to harness the power of their liberal arts degree to ensure success throughout their time at Muhlenberg and beyond.” Weidner expanded, stating that the program “contains reflection prompts, activity pages and resource pages to support the process of figuring out what [students] might want to study and where [they] want [their] career to go based on [their] personal interests and values.”

“Every single first-year MAP appointment is completely individualized to that specific student,” Weidner adds, having already scheduled over 100 of

these meetings. “In the first-year MAP appointments, we start by discussing students’ specific career goals and interests, then I provide any resources I’m aware of on campus that I think could support them.”

As has always been the case, first-year students are assigned to an academic advisor through their first year seminar (FYS) courses. “As faculty, academic advisors interact with students in their classes, but while there are similarities and some crossover between teaching and advising, teaching and advising are not the same thing,” commented Senior Lecturer in Religion Studies and Director of Academic Advising Sharon Albert. “Academic advisors work more holistically with their advisees than we can in the classroom, helping students navigate the academic program as a whole and also ensuring that they know what other resources are available to them and how to access those resources.”

The final of the three first-year coaches is the college life coach. “Also through PPD, students are assigned to meet with their college life coach twice in their first semester,” comments Stephens. One of these meetings occurred in September for “initial check-ins,” with a second one set for November. “By this point, the goal is for college life

coaches to help students begin setting larger goals for their time at Muhlenberg based on their interests, strengths and values.”

“Faculty work with students in large groups, but there are many others on campus who spend at least as much time with students as faculty do, and for many students their go-to person on campus is as likely, or more likely, to be someone on the College Life team than faculty,” Albert added, acknowledging that students tend to have more access to college life staff members than faculty, which may make them more inclined to meet with their college life coaches.

Director of International Student Support, PPD Instructor and College Life Coach Thomas Janis says that his meetings are “all about where students are currently at the moment and what types of resources they could benefit from knowing.” He continues, “I’ve had discussions ranging from how withdrawing from a class works and the implications of that process, to talking about joining clubs like the outdoors club and other org[anization]s, to learning a student has a twin and connecting them with our colleague in the office who is also a mother of twins, so they had a chance to connect with a nice chat.”

Janis adds that students are required to submit reflections about their experiences with in this new coaching model through their PPD courses. “These reflections continue to help foster self-awareness and personal development and align with the broader goals of the PPD course.”

Students seem to be pleased with their coaching experiences. Emma Howson ‘27, who was matched with College Chaplain Reverend Janelle Neubauer, stated that “I only met with her because it was required for my PPD class, but I’m really glad I did. We had a nice chat about what it means to be a college student.” Howson reflects that the conversation was similar to that of a family member—personal, warm and welcoming.

With most coaches being matched randomly, some students were connected with faculty members with whom they already had a strong relationship, including athletes. Alyssa Hartnett ‘27 was matched with her lacrosse coach, Morgan Graham, “which is cool, so I know them on the academic side as well as the athletic side.” While agreeing that their meeting was scheduled as a requirement, she comments on this

SEE **MAP** PAGE 9

FROM **STUDENTS** PAGE 1

dents. “Students had to advocate for the bare minimum and it was until just recently that resources like listening circles have been offered, but even then it is not as publicized. It is clear from the resources that have been publicized like the recent vigil and spaces to speak in that feel unwelcoming for all students to attend... that the school has a bias that they are trying to enforce on students.”

Giovanni Merrifield ‘24 further lamented the campus climate, noting that “it feels very tense, like people are walking on eggshells. I definitely do not feel supported in my views, but I do have a small group of people that share similar sentiments, which has been nice.” This view was shared by Daburah, who noted her hesitancy to voice her opinions and identity unapologetically. “I have felt conflicted about voicing my opinions and my identity online and in various contexts as a Palestinian.”

Many students have been vocal critics of Israel and Israeli policy despite the potential for pushback. Milo Obrzut ‘25 expressed his unique position as a Jewish student on campus. “I love Judaism, and I love Muhlenberg’s Jewish community, and I see and feel that both are in a state of mourning right now. However, I do not believe that any aspect of my Jewish values would ever encourage me to seek vengeance, especially not against innocents who did not perpetrate any harm against

me... Everytime a person or institution in a position of power and prominence takes the time to condemn Hamas but not the IDF, I worry that this warmoningering streak will claim even more lives.”

Several students have applauded the reaction of the student community at Muhlenberg. “The vigil was the first time I was given a platform to grieve, it was really emotional and supportive,” noted Dan Harel ‘26, an Israeli student. The memorial service organized by Jewish students on campus drew a crowd of over 200 students, faculty and community members to honor those who had been lost since Oct. 7, to pray for the safe return of the hostages and to lament the perpetuation of the conflict at large. Given the tensions simmering across the globe and the images of passionate, sometimes rage-filled protests in major cities, anxiety levels were running high for Jewish students in the hours preceding the service last Thursday evening. “I know that we were very afraid of a protest during the vigil, which did not occur. I appreciate the Muhlenberg community for letting us grieve in peace and with respect,” noted Ankori.

Some students took issue with the fact that the student-organized vigil was publicly acknowledged by the Muhlenberg Instagram account. The vigil was not, however, coordinated with the College. Rather, it was put together by a grassroots conglomerate of Jewish students with no organizational or insti-

tutional oversight.

In addition to fears of counter-protests, Jewish, Muslim and Arab students on campus have had to deal with increasing anxiety surrounding the national perception and reaction to the war. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) released a statement soon after news broke of the Hamas attack warning of increasing threats to those associated with the Jewish and Muslim faiths motivated, “at least in part, by the conflict between Israel and Hamas.”

Professor Brian Mello, Ph.D, chair of the political science department, offered his take on the context for this most recent round of hostilities between Israel and Hamas. Hamas, which has controlled the Gaza strip since winning the last round of Palestinian parliamentary elections in 2006, is an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamist political ideology with roots in early 20th century Egypt. “Hamas emerged in the 1970s, as activists established charities, schools, and medical centers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip,” said Associate Anthropology Professor Maura Finklestein, Ph.D., “It was officially established as a liberation group in 1987, alongside the First Intifada (the uprising).” Despite the Muslim Brotherhood largely abandoning violence as an official tactic, Hamas, which was founded in 1987, has consistently utilized violent tactics to achieve political gains since the collapse of the Oslo Accords in the late 1990s.

While their official charter calls for the ultimate destruction of the State of Israel and the expulsion of Jews from the Levant, professor Mello emphasizes the complexities within Palestinian domestic politics that complicate these ultimate goals: “Are they fully committed to preventing Israel from existing, as founding documents read? Or is this posturing as the organization faces challenges among other Islamist and militant groups within domestic Palestinian politics? Does the 2017 statement indicating a potential willingness to enter into a long-term ceasefire signal an underlying pragmatism that might discount fears that the group is hellbent on destroying Israel? Or, given that Hamas’s leadership sits both within Palestine and outside of it, and given that it plays both a political and a militant role, it could just be that all of these are true—that there is no clear way of defining what Hamas’s true goals vis-a-vis Israel.”

Since 2007, Israel and Hamas have fought each other several times. The current round of fighting is different from past rounds, however. “The scale and success of Hamas’ attack last week are unprecedented. They reflect both large-scale successful planning by Hamas and also a complete failure by the Israeli intelligence services and government to either be aware of the planned attacks or to move quickly to counter them,” reflected Professor of History Mark Stein, Ph.D. “The coming

Israeli invasion of Gaza is going to produce horrific numbers of civilian deaths.”

The media has played a large role in shaping both the perceptions of and reactions to the current war in Gaza. Daburah shared, “There is so much bias it is unbelievable.” Social media has had the most direct and detrimental impact on the students at Muhlenberg. Merrifield was not the only student to mention Yik Yak when asked about the position of the media in this conflict. “Yik Yak has shown some real colors in people here on this campus. I fear that one day those offensive words (on both ends) will decide that it is acceptable to say them without anonymity and spread hate and chaos across campus,” said Merrifield. Criticism of Yik Yak posts was echoed by Obrzut, who made a specific reference to a post from Oct. 7 which contained a gruesome and inaccurate generalization. He commented, “This is unequivocally hate speech. People have the right to say what they want, but this was unacceptable.”

Yoav Susskind ‘25 commented on the unique position of Instagram in relation to the conflict. “Social media allows us to see the most extreme positions, and everything is without context. On Instagram, it seems like everything is terrible, but when I turn to the Muhlenberg community, I see that there is good and kindness in the sea of hatred.”

Additional Reporting by Kabir Burman ‘27

FROM ABROAD PAGE 1

questions I had,” said Hartney. Hartney continued adding, “While abroad, the office of Global Ed[ucation] reached out maybe two to three times. Mainly with reminder[s] of things that needed to be completed, but not so much checking in [on] me and seeing how they could support me.”

Molly Levine ‘24, who studied in France in the spring of 2023, added, “I never felt that the Office of Global Ed[ucation] was a place where you could go for questions or advice.”

One student, who asked to remain anonymous because they are still very anxious about their experience with the office and are currently abroad, said that they were sent another student’s personal information, were sent the wrong documentation and generally found the process working with the office to be confusing and stressful.

Maya Brooks ‘24, who was abroad last spring in France, shared, “I was somehow behind in the process without the Global Ed[ucation] office letting me know even when I repeatedly asked them if I needed to do anything else and was told no. The process was so convoluted and confusing and I didn’t know how to do anything. I went to the Global Ed[ucation] office for help and they seemed as clueless as I was. I was completely hopeless and only through intense research, trial and error, talking to the abroad program and having a mental breakdown did I finally figure out just how to request a visa appointment. All in all, it was a completely miserable stressful process and I didn’t feel any help from the department.”

Muhlenberg offers full-term abroad programs but also provides Muhlenberg Integrated

Learning Experiences (MILAs), which are short-term study abroad opportunities. According to Senior Lecturer of Religion Studies Sharon Albert, Ph.D., who has led many MILAs over the years, the study abroad program is still recovering from the pandemic. “Travel has become more complicated post-COVID, and we’ve lost some institutional memory,” she said.

Carina Filemyr ‘23 participated in the MILAs “Writing About Place” in Italy and “This Land is Your Land” in the Potomac.

“During my MILA to Italy, I [had] to go to the local hospital and felt really confused by Global Ed[ucation]’s assistance with that. I have an outstanding bill, which I had assumed would be covered by the insurance I paid for prior to the MILA... I was totally unaware that on the Italy MILA I would [also] be responsible for all of my dinners and some meals throughout. I wasn’t expecting to spend so much extra money. I struggled because I had to use a credit card, and Discover isn’t usually international. I would’ve been prepared if I was made aware!”

According to Muhlenberg’s website, the College “strives to make study abroad opportunities affordable.”

Students are charged Muhlenberg tuition and receive their same financial aid package. However, students are often shocked by how much additional fees can add up such as Visa application fees, medical fees, flights, and food and groceries as well.”

“[The Office of Global Education] isn’t very helpful in preparing you for what it’s actually going to be like there,” explained Des Suarez ‘23, who was abroad in the spring of ‘22 in Italy. “I was not financially prepared at all to go to Italy and I am definitely still in debt because my mom was trying to support me since I was unprepared. So that was something very difficult that they don’t really talk about. They say you should have \$4,000 before you go but that was not possible for me no matter how much I worked.”

The College offers grants for MILAs but restricts it to one trip only, and the Experiential Learning Grant strictly states that study abroad expenses are not eligible for this grant.

In addition to help with logistics, the study abroad office is also supposed to support Muhlenberg’s learning goals. For Giovanni Merrifeild ‘24, who went to South Africa in the fall of 2022 for his MILA “Culture, Conflict, & Development,” the office was not receptive to his concerns about the program’s inclusiveness. “As a Black student who went to a predominantly Black country, there were many students [on the MILA] who had said and acted in a racially biased way that I was very

upset with. Not only that, but some people on the trip thought it was my responsibility to educate those who were ignorant on the experience of Black South Africans. Mind you, I am not South African,” explained Merrifeild. “I had tried to express how inappropriate this was to Dr. Amani, and she had said: ‘Gio, you should be honored that students want to hear from you and learn from you. Why wouldn’t you want to educate them?’ To this response I had blatantly told her it was not my job to do so, and that that was not okay by any means. She simply could not understand where I was coming from...she proceeded to tell me that what I was saying was not valid nor correct. She raised her voice to me to the point where I almost ended the zoom call.”

In response to this, Amani said, “[Merrifeild’s] account of our zoom meeting is completely different from what I recall.”

Other students had similar experiences to Merrifeild.

“In the one meeting I had with Dr. Amani, I didn’t really feel like she had much patience for me as an individual... I just didn’t feel like I could ask her questions.” said Naava Wison ‘25, who is currently abroad in London.

“To be completely honest, Dr. Amani was the most difficult to work with. Most of the challenges I had with working with her involved the credit transfer process and her not being organized on the other end of things,” said Hartney.

Jolie Lanning ‘25, who is currently abroad in London, shared, “Trying to submit my application was pretty frustrating, as I kept getting emails from Dr. Amani saying I didn’t turn something in but I did. Any response I got from her didn’t acknowledge my concerns and questions. I think we went back and forth like this for a bit. It was basically like she wasn’t reading any of my messages and I was receiving an automated email response.”

In reaction to Amani’s resignation, while many students were surprised, they were not exactly disappointed.

Upon hearing the news, Lanning said, “I’m really not surprised. Half the time I felt like she didn’t really know what she was talking about [and] was kind

[of] all over the place.”

Rachelle Montilus ‘24, who was in Ireland last spring, said “I guess [I’m] not really surprised. But, I’m still in shock. Immediate resignation is difficult, especially when there are students that are counting on you to do some work. And so, it’s like you want to know that the program director isn’t just going to leave you hanging but I guess it is what it is.”

“People leave higher education for a number of reasons. They leave for professional development and finding better opportunities and higher pay. It just happened that the OGE staff got better opportunities and decided to move on. That’s no one’s fault,” said Amani.

Levi Roush ‘24, who was abroad last spring in London, said simply, “I think it’s for the best.”

As for Goodfellow, many were sad to see her go.

“I’m really shocked to hear this. Sophie was one of the few people in the Office of Global Ed[ucation] who would actually answer questions I had. [I] appreciate all she did and will miss her,” said Hartney.

Sidney Kaeb ‘24 said, “Sophie was very welcoming and helpful both when I had work-study with the Office of Global Education and while I was figuring out my study abroad plan. She introduced me to the program that I ended up going to and was even on the phone with me while I was at the Spanish Consulate in New York helping me problem-solve after one of my forms was rejected.”

Albert shared, “I am very excited for Sophie. She has made amazing contributions to our Global Education program and has provided strong and steady continuity through some difficult transitions. She is moving on to a position with higher-level responsibilities. She is extremely competent and always professional. I wish her the best and hope we will have opportunities to work together in the future.”

As for the future of the study abroad office, Furge stated “I hope that we have a new program specialist hired in a few weeks and that we have a new dean or executive director, for sure by summer [2024].”

Many students shared what

they hoped for in regards to the future of the study abroad office.

“I would like to see things be much more organized and transparent. I also hope that there can be more conversations about real concerns that can face students abroad like theft, sexual harassment, racism or homophobia and financial management,” said Levine ‘24.

“I think they need more people on board. Specifically to serve as advisors...They need to touch base with individual groups more often, as opposed to having general meetings for all programs. Each program is so different, with different deadlines and necessary steps to prepare,” said Roush.

Merrifeild shared, “I would like to see the Global Education program gain a director that is culturally sensitive and aware, along with someone who actually cares about their students and what they have to say.”

Professor of Sociology, Director of International Studies Program Janine Chi, Ph.D., is currently co-teaching the Cuba MILA, “Bodies and Identities in Contemporary Cuba.” Chi shared that “My hope for [the Office of Global Education] moving forward is to improve communication, transparency and advancing the academic learning goals for global learning.”

While students experienced frustrations working with the office, it didn’t always negatively impact their time abroad.

“I had an amazing experience abroad! Something I learned is that you have to be all right with not knowing everything and just figuring some things out once you get there. It is not the office of Global Ed[ucation]’s job to tell us everything, but it is their job to effectively share all necessary information with us,” said Roush.

AT THE GENERAL'S QUARTERS

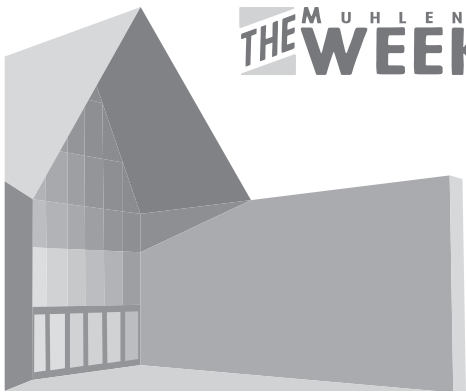
October 31, 2023

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ARTS & CULTURE

“Sometimes things fall apart, so that better things can fall together.”

- Marilyn Monroe

Arts Marathon puts the “fun” in fundraising

By EMMA NORTHROP
STAFF WRITER

On Oct. 13 at 6 p.m., the Arts Marathon began in Parents Plaza. Arts Marathon is a 12-hour long showcase of Muhlenberg’s artistic talent, during which all proceeds are donated to charity. Around Parents Plaza, student artists were also set up selling painted records, handmade jewelry, stickers, greeting cards and various fiber arts until 8 p.m. Despite the student makers closing up shop, the event was full of excitement at 6 a.m. the next morning as students made and enjoyed art for charity and in dedication to Jimmy Buffet.

The charity of choice for this year’s Arts Marathon was the Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center, which was received enthusiastically by the Muhlenberg community. This center, importantly, serves as a safe space for all members of the LGBTQ+ community in the Lehigh Valley. Bradbury-Sullivan hosts community groups and runs programming for LGBTQ+ community, youth, health and research. All of these programs help to affirm LGBTQ+ members and provide the support they need. Attendees were able to

make donations throughout the night.

Since this event wasn’t ticketed, money was raised in other areas and activities, a large portion of the fundraising was done via auction. Many of the groups opened donations that allowed students to donate, and some of the groups who performed incorporated auctionable acts or items into their performances, making the event interactive and engaging. While this is not new for Arts Marathon, many of the campus’ new students had no idea just how interactive the performances would be. Surprised by the first auction, Leila Farzin, ‘27, shared her experience with the show as a whole, stating, “I went to the Arts Marathon originally just to see my roommate and another friend perform. They both did so great and I got to see a lot of other cool acts as well!”

Speaking of those “other cool acts,” the night started with a peppy performance from the Muhlenberg Pep Band, followed by some individual performers and Artist Collective’s (ArtCo) auction. Then, the dance troupes performed. Despite the lack of emergency tapboards, Copacetic Rhythms (Copes), Muhlenberg’s tap dance troupe, adapted to the



PHOTO BY CADEN DOWGIN ‘27.

Muhlenberg's Pep band performs at Arts Marathon.

smaller platform and debuted some new members during their tap routine to “Still Into You” by Paramore. A selection of the Copes’ members even competed in an improv dance battle, where audience members bid to choose the song “Spooky Scary Skeletons” and voted via Venmo for their favorite. The plaza was then awash in a sea of fresh, icy green as hip-hop group MINT* thrilled with a mashup including “Calling All the Monsters” by China Anne McClain. The group auctioned off a flash mob, so keep your eyes peeled on campus for impromptu performances!

When it was time for the improv and comedy troupes at roughly 11 p.m., several different

spectators appeared– including a very fashionable dog in a festive onesie. Among the comedy groups that performed were Underground Improv Project (UiP), the Muhlenberg Improv Association (MIA), Fun with Science and To Be Determined (TBD). The groups gave the audience plenty of opportunity to get involved in the comedy, with audience members bidding to choose settings, change circumstances and include props. One big ticket item of the night was a cup full of water, which if bought, the performers would have to soak their scene partner with. Hilarity ensued, with fishermen, a British Applebee’s waiter and ghost-hunting worms taking

the stage. TBD rounded out the Parents Plaza performances with a rowdy Irish drinking song, auctioned freestyle rap and a final sketch titled “Hey Dude,” a modified version of the Beatles’ “Hey Jude.” This final piece was tailored to describe the lucky auction winner, Max Gorman ‘26, Arts Marathon Coordinator.

At midnight, patrons peeled their frozen posteriors from the plaza benches as the show shifted over to the Fireside Lounge for a stacked set of six a cappella performances. CODA, Dynamics, Noteworthy, Acafellas, Chaimonics and InAcchord wowed the crowd with unaccompanied songs. When speaking of her experience as an a cappella performer, Nola Thompson ‘27, stated “I am so happy to have had the incredible opportunity to perform with my fellow Dynamics in front of such a supportive and enthusiastic audience!” “Enthusiastic” is one way to describe the crowd during the a cappella performances, the cheers of “enthusiastic” aca-fans could be heard through all of Seegers.

As with the comedy groups, the a cappella performances also brought in the big bucks via auction. Perhaps the most

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Latine Heritage Month concludes

Muhlenberg’s Wood Dining Commons and Comunidad honors the end of Latine Heritage Month.

By SHAIYAN FEISAL
ASSISTANT A&C EDITOR

Continuing the month-long celebration of Latine Heritage Month, Wood Dining Commons Executive Chef Mary Martinez created a menu to celebrate cultural dishes from various countries from Central and South America. On Oct. 5, the dining hall served mangu (Dominican mashed plantains), pastelón de carne (meat pie), moro de habichuelas negras (one-pot rice and black beans), ceviche de camarones (shrimp



COURTESY OF @MUHLENBERGCOMUNIDAD.

Latine Heritage Month comes to a close with a Bachata Lesson.

ceviche) and flan de vainilla (vanilla flan). Mangu is a classic Dominican dish that is usually served during breakfast time. Pastelón de carne is both a Dominican and Puerto Rican dish. In the Dominican Republic, mashed plantains are added, and it is cooked in a casserole dish. In Puerto Rico, it is more similar to a lasagna as the plantains are cut lengthwise and layered to strips and fried. Moro de habichuelas is a Latin American dish that is quite simple to make,

but extremely flavorful. Ceviche de camarones is most commonly associated with Peru, but dishes similar to it are made around the Pacific coast and elements are added such as sweet potatoes, toasted corn, tomatoes and peanuts. Flan de vainilla is a widely known delicacy in Central and South America.

On Oct. 12, the dining hall served arroz amarillo (yellow rice), habichuelas guisadas (Puerto Rican stewed rice and beans), empanadas de carne

(meat empanadas) and bizcocho tres leches (three milk cake). Arroz amarillo has Spanish origins and is made from combining cooked rice with chicken stock, onions, saffron and turmeric to give the rice its lively color. Habichuelas guisadas is from Puerto Rico and it’s a comfort food served with warm rice and made out of sofritos and beans. Empanadas are from Spain and Portugal. The word empanada comes from the Spanish verb “empanar” meaning to wrap or coat in bread. Beef empanadas are the most common variation of empanadas. Bizcocho tres leches is an authentic Mexican cake. The syrup has three types of milk in it and holes are poked into the cake before pouring the syrup to make it extra moist.

Keanna Peña ‘25 said, “I really appreciate the dining hall making all of these cultural dishes, especially the Dominican dishes like mangu and pastelón! It was really nice to eat the food

I would usually have at home.”

On Oct. 6, Comunidad and Women of Color Collective (WCC) collaborated to bring in Ely Dance Studio, the first Latin dance studio in the Lehigh Valley, to teach bachata lessons to the Muhlenberg community. This romantic style of dance originated from the 1960s in the Dominican Republic and combines three different dance styles that has now developed into a more electronic and modern dance style.

Comunidad commemorated the last few days of Latine Heritage Month with their ‘Charlamos” or “We Chat” event. At the Charlamos event, participants ate nachos and were able to chat with each other about what Latine Heritage month means to them. Secretary of Comunidad, Adrián Padrón-Curet ‘26, said that “At our Charlamos Event we talked about elections, what Comunidad members want to see more of, and the outcome of Latine Heritage Month!”

Artist spotlight on Molly Layden

PHOTO BY FRANCESCO GHIGNONI.

Dancer Molly Layden ‘24 reflects on her journey and growth in the Muhlenberg Dance Program.

By ALMARAH URMAN
ASSISTANT LAYOUT EDITOR

If you’ve glanced through the window at a dance rehearsal anywhere at Muhlenberg in the last three years, there’s a good chance you’ve seen Molly Layden ‘24 dancing her heart out. Her time as an artist at Muhlenberg has been jam-packed with rich development.

While Layden knew she wanted to pursue dance, particularly tap dance, in college, she originally didn’t think Muhlenberg was going to be the right fit for her.

“If you ask any student here who values tap dance in a college program equally to all of the other styles, we all auditioned for the same like eight schools. For me though, Muhlenberg originally was on the bottom of my list, because I was really convinced that I wanted a BFA program. However, the second I stepped onto Muhlenberg’s campus, I knew it was the place for me, and my audition class with Karen Dearborn solidified that. I just immediately knew that I would get the support and genuine encouragement that I needed to grow in my artistry and technique,” reflected Layden.

In addition to support and encouragement, the Muhlenberg Dance Department has also provided Layden with several opportunities to be part of dance rehearsal processes and performances from the moment she stepped on campus. She made her departmental debut during her first semester at college, in the fall of 2020, in “Ephemerality.” She has

continued to perform in almost every departmental show, making appearances in “Reset: New Dances,” “In Motion” and Muhlenberg Dance Association’s (MDA) “Digital Dopamine.” She has particularly made an impact for herself within the tap progression and has worked closely with Robyn Watson, dance director of the co-curriculum.

“She really understands my passion for tap dance and supports me through all of the joys and struggles that come with the form. She forces me to count, which I am simply not great at, but she’s really challenged my sense of rhythm and play in timing. What I love about her, too, is that she doesn’t just push me in tap, but she’s also really supportive of my journey in other styles. I think as a dancer if you have a style you ‘specialize’ in, if that’s the right word, it can be easy to get yourself stuck there but she really encourages me to value all of my interests. I’ve also loved all of my professors here, they all have been unlocking so much strength and artistic freedom in my dancing. I know that I’ve always got someone in my corner with them,” Layden said.

Layden has also been involved in several non-departmental dance projects that have contributed to her growth as an artist as well. She has performed in several Muhlenberg Dance Association shows and is the co-vice president of the Copacetic Rhythms, the student tap ensemble. She is also a dancer on the Perkulators jazz team.

One of the most impactful things for Layden’s journey as an artist was the semester she

spent abroad at the Accademia dell’Arte in Arezzo, Italy.

“Not to be one of those ‘Wow, I studied abroad and it changed my life’ kind of people but it truly did. As my lovely friend Hannah Kulbitsky ‘24 says, ‘I fell back in love with dance when I didn’t even know I had fallen out of love with it.’ My semester there really challenged me creatively in finding my own artistic interests. My semesters at Muhlenberg really started that process for me and it sort of culminated into a crazy artistic breakthrough for me during that semester abroad.” Layden shared.

This semester, Layden is bringing the exploration and creativity she found within herself back to campus.

“Because of that semester [abroad], I discovered this desire to create in a way I never had before. I never considered myself a choreographer in any way, but once I was forced to create, I realized it was something I wanted to pursue further. This semester, I’m taking beginner dance composition and decided to propose a piece for the Fall Studio Sessions concert, so my first choreographic work on a cast that’s not myself will be performed in that concert! The process has really been pushing me to not only create but to actually formulate and communicate a clear vision for the piece, which has pushed me so much to actually decide what I want if that makes sense. It’s been really great though and my cast is really really lovely in helping me through it.”

As Layden moves and dances her way through her final semester and a half at



Molly Layden during a dance performance.

Muhlenberg, she hopes to make the most of her time and dance as much as she can.

“My hope is really just to savor every moment I have left and dance my little heart out. I’m realizing that I am so lucky to be in a space where I have studios to dance and create to my heart’s content, I know that won’t always be accessible to me after I graduate. I also want to savor the people that I’m dancing for and with. Dancing with some of my best friends in the world is something so special to me and I want to live in that joy for as long as I can.”

Muhlenberg’s dance program has helped Layden discover

multiple passions within the world of dance and beyond. While she doesn’t have concrete plans for the future yet, she has the skills to pursue multiple things, like performing, choreography, teaching and even marketing, as she works in the Theatre and Dance Marketing Office.

“Something my professor abroad once said really struck me... he said based on all of the things he’s done that ‘If I stop dancing tomorrow, I’ll be satisfied.’ So that is my new hope, to dance and be satisfied.”

SEE **MARATHON** PAGE 5

coveted item was an Acafella’s signed flannel, which brought in over \$80 for Bradbury-Sullivan. Other auctioned items included a mystery bag, a date with a Noteworthy member, beatboxing for a song and a singing valentine’s telegram. One of the most hilarious bids was lyric changes to “Stacy’s Mom,” which resulted in the ‘Fellas singing “Ella’s Dad is really really rad/He’s all I want and I want him so bad/Ella can’t you see you’re just not the one for me/I know it might be bad but I’m in love with Ella’s Dad.”

The fun continued into the wee hours of the morning, with the Great American Song Project (GASP), a dramatic reading of Jimmy Buffet’s Wikipedia Page, Just Dance, Yoga and a Muhlenberg Theatre Association (MTA) assistant lip sync battle. The final act of the night, really morning, was the Muhlenberg

Theatre Association singing Jimmy Buffet’s “Cheeseburger in Paradise,” solidly tying in with the Jimmy Buffet dedication established earlier in the night. When asked about her impression of the festival, Daniella Zalot ‘27 stated, “I’m so glad we came together to help the community in such a creative way. Arts Marathon really showcases who we are as a school.”

Just like the aforementioned “Cheeseburger in Paradise,” Arts Marathon was definitely “worth every damn bit of sacrifice” from lack of sleep, or at the very least a very irregular sleep schedule. Regarded by audience members as “electric,” Arts Marathon decidedly succeeded in both bringing the Muhlenberg community together and raising money for the Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center. TBD’s Lillian Palluzzi ‘27 sums up the Marathon, stating, “Performing in the Arts Marathon was

exhilarating. It was my first time performing this form of improv in front of an audience. They were a good crowd for the first time and [I’m] glad our group was able to raise money for the Bradbury-Sullivan Center. [I’m] definitely excited to participate in it next year!”

Arts Marathon ‘23 has raised \$850 and is still counting!



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Confronting discomfort through art

Artist Ashe Kaye talks about how their art is reflective of exploration and acceptance.

By SHINAM HUSSAIN
A&C EDITOR

In the Galleria of Muhlenberg’s Baker Center for the Arts (CA) there has been an exhibit titled “Glut and Guzzle” displayed since the start of the academic year. This exhibit is a series of photographs that illustrate different forms of the body, some accompanied by food. Initial responses and reactions to the exhibit by the student body were those of shock, discomfort and fascination. Ashe Kaye, the artist of this exhibit, came to Muhlenberg on Oct. 16 to discuss their thought process when putting together the exhibit, and the meaning behind the art.

Kaye works as a multidisciplinary artist, as well as a photographer, educator and an object maker who uses 3D technology to explore the interconnectedness of gender norms, sexuality and indulgence. Their work deals with and challenges normative ideas of gender expression and identity, while being reflective of their journey in gender and breaking free of the expectations placed onto them during their upbringing. Kaye grew up in a Mormon household, and this plays a large role in their art

currently, as they navigated their life through a Mormon lens, to then rejecting Mormonism entirely. Kaye spoke about how rejecting their Mormon upbringing played a large role in the “Glut and Guzzle” work, stating, “This work was right after I left my Mormon upbringing and I was going through an exploration period. I was exploring things I wasn’t able to experience, and all the things I was repressing. Growing up Mormon...I knew I didn’t want kids. Which was different from everyone I was around, and I struggled with that.”

There was a piece in the exhibit where a female-presenting person is photographed with a stoic and blank expression on their face while cracking an egg in their hand, with a small male-presenting body in the corner. Kaye speaks to this piece and how it is a reflection of the feelings they grappled with while being Mormon saying, “The female-presenting person in this, with the blank expression on their face is kind of representative of being stuck in something so mechanical, and this mounted male-presented flesh overlooking, there’s tension there. And then there’s an implied tension of being a mother and cracking the egg—



‘Glut and Guzzle’ artist Ashe Kaye speaks about their works displayed in the Galleria.

and the egg can symbolize fertility and motherhood in many cases.”

The exhibit deals largely with photographing different areas of the body, and many of the photos have food immersed in the image as well. There is a photo that is a close-up of someone taking a bite out of a hot dog, with another photo of someone’s face covered with cake, while their eyes are rolled back and their mouth is wide open. When describing how food played an integral part in the photography in this exhibit Kaye said, “As a female-presenting person, most of my life being a bigger

person, I have always struggled with food. So I use food as a metaphor a lot in my art. Food, and consumption of food can be used so metaphorically, when expressing indulgence, or in how overconsumption makes us feel. Like, if you eat too many sweets, you feel sick. A lot of the time, I felt that way about my own body. So having that in my work was important to me.”

Kaye and their partner collaborated for many of the pieces in the exhibit, as Kaye stated that certain pieces were to highlight their partner’s exploration of gender identity. Kaye expressed, “I collaborate with my partner. This work came out of both of our gender journeys, and it was so beautiful to come together as artists to express this together, and then accept that.”

There is a photograph in this exhibit that shows a person unclothed, attempting to sew up a doll. This was a piece Kaye and their partner collaborated on to express what their gender exploration was like, and how it has felt like for them, as Kaye stated, “It’s meant to show an act of sewing yourself back together, after feeling so gross in your own body. There’s a theme of acceptance and love in this.”

The exhibit is meant to showcase Kaye and their partner’s journey into realizing their gender, grappling with their identities in relation to the system of beliefs they grew up with and then their eventual acceptance and love for their identities. Kaye speaks about how important they felt it was to display this work by stating, “It’s important to give a voice and representation to issues regarding gender identity, and give other people struggling a place to see that ‘it’s not just me.’”

“The people who are vocal help the people who are less vocal feel more comfortable,” they continued.

Since the exhibit elicited so much shock from many observers, the idea of putting

a content warning ahead of the exhibit was discussed at the talk where Kaye expressed, “I really rejected the idea of a content warning. Putting a content warning on bodies we already police, when there isn’t full nudity, I felt very strongly about not having that. Having a content warning on bodies we already police, trans bodies and female bodies, does not further the conversation. You can like it, you can hate it, but associating content warnings on bodies with police, I felt very strongly about not having that.”

Esther Klinger ‘25 stated “It’s important to showcase art that makes you uncomfortable because it is the artist’s real experience and it is valid. They want to show that and it’s cool that Muhlenberg gave them the opportunity to do so.”

The exhibit was displayed during Orientation Weekend, where the incoming first-year students were able to see it all as soon as they came onto campus. When asked about the reasoning behind this decision, Director of the Martin Art Gallery Jessica Ambler stated, “I want people to show up and see themselves. To see this is a place where they belong. They can express themselves. And that’s especially important for freshmen, they are on their own for the first time and free of parents and guardians, and they can explore themselves more. I’m less interested in people being uncomfortable, and more interested in what they’re doing with that discomfort.”

Anna Hanley ‘25, who was taken aback by the exhibit at first, gave her thoughts on it after hearing Kaye speak about the work saying, “It feels so personal to the artist but yet so many people can see themselves in it as well, and it’s universal that way. It’s there to spark a conversation.”

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What students in the arts should fear following Hollywood’s recent strikes.

By MEGAN HANSEN
CAMPUS VOICES EDITOR

It is no secret that the bright lights of Hollywood have been dim these past few months. On Sept. 27, the Writers Guild of America’s (WGA) astounding five-month strike finally came to an end, with the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) continuing to hit the bricks. WGA union leaders approved an agreement made with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP) after months of conflict and negotiation over a new three-year contract for members of the guild.

Although resolutions have finally been reached between Hollywood higher-ups and their workers about pay and general working conditions, my apprehension about the situation remains. I can’t help but think about the potential future of the film and entertainment industry that artists were forced to consider for the duration of the strike. The low value at which these major studios have revealed themselves to hold each employee is detrimental to the number of opportunities available in an industry that is already notoriously hard to break into, and the authenticity of its products.

The whole strike was a matter

of frugality on behalf of major motion picture studios. The most notable issue for students to be concerned about was the downsizing of production teams by the business tycoons at the forefront of each studio. With the goal to save and earn as much money as possible, they essentially cut as many people as they could during the on-set process of creative projects—replacing them with computer generated systems such as artificial intelligence (AI). The first to go were those who make hourly wages as opposed to contractually negotiated ones—interns and “below-the-line crew members,” which refers to boom operators, hair and makeup artists, gaffers, script supervisors, etc.

Writers and their teams were also being removed from sets, as it is now believed that their job is complete once the script is solidified and shooting had begun. Studios are even giving into the phenomenon of “background shows.” This refers to the use of AI to write simple, mindless television plots for the purpose of putting on while viewers scroll on their phones or do other tasks.

For my entire journey in the arts as a child, and now as a double major in theatre and film studies, I have been told that succeeding in an industry as cut-throat and full of ambition and talent as this one is all about an



People show their support for SAG-AFTRA. Credit to @sagaftra on Instagram.

eagerness to learn— through hands-on experience as well as studying the craft. The entertainment industry has essentially created a self-destructive system in that hands-on experience is a crucial qualification for a job, and yet the opportunities to obtain this kind of work are disappearing before our very eyes. It is discouraging to say the least. I am afraid that no matter how hard I work, I am now beating a dead horse. I am afraid that I will have to reluctantly leave my passions behind for the sake of my livelihood.

I spoke with Sean Schofield, Ph.D., of the Muhlenberg Career Center, and had an enlightening conversation on the value of experience; he believes that it will never be lost entirely. In fact, he even spoke about using negative experiences such as these to our advantage, encouraging concerned students in the arts

to “connect with people in the industry, especially Muhlenberg alumni.” We talked about the value of passing on knowledge through talking about experience as a way for students to “build resilience” as they overcome a rapidly changing industry. By talking to people who are actively trying to navigate this issue, we can gauge how to prepare for what may come our way when we graduate.

I also think it is important to continue to get student-made and independent art out into the world. People are attracted to what they can relate to. When we lose sight of self-expression, and the telling of personal stories through film and television, art loses its authenticity. There is beauty in the fact that there is a piece of myself in every film that I make, and every script that I write. Each and every story that I touch upon resonates with a

defining factor of my life. Submitting to film festivals, hosting screenings and even utilizing the Internet as a way to push the narrative that our experiences and projects are beautiful and here to stay will reinforce the importance of the collaboration of individual talents on a collaborative piece

My main takeaway from the last few months is that it is important to remember in a time like this that art, in all of its forms, is a reflection of humanity. In the arts, people come together and form a community driven by creativity and passion when they work on set together. Collaborative artworks are artifacts of human connection, and with the new industry model, we are essentially erasing this from our future history.

Letter to the editor: Notes on Israel/Hamas conflict

This article has been edited for grammar and clarity. The full version of this piece is available online at <https://muhlenbergweekly.com>.

I wish to offer some thoughts about the recent Hamas attack on Israel and the subsequent Israeli declaration of war. I do so with trepidation because it seems almost callous, insensitive, even un-human to treat instances of human suffering with a detached, analytical lens. I offer these thoughts as my own analysis as a political science professor who thinks that no moment—from the small and mundane to the dramatic and profound—has an inherent meaning, but rather that we are called to make meaning of human events. I also do it as one who believes that, just as the awesome possibility to do good rests in everyone, so too does the terrible capacity to be complicit in evil.

Foremost, a quick comment on the Hamas attack: By definition much of the Hamas attack on Israel represents a violation of international law regulating human rights and warfare. This

includes violations of direct prohibitions on attacks targeting civilians; prohibitions on torture; prohibitions on summary executions and prohibitions on the unlawful detention of civilians. In short, whether or not you think Palestinians have a right to resist colonialism, the attacks that took place in Israel involved forms of violence defined as war crimes and not protected under international law. While Israel is afforded a right to self-defense by international law, collective punishment is proscribed by the international treaties governing the rules of war. What Israel will inevitably struggle with is how to defend itself without engaging in its own forms of war criminality.

But, it’s tricky to think about Hamas in relation to international law for several reasons. Foremost, Hamas is both a state-like and a non-state-like actor. It involves social welfare elements such as education, provision of medical care, and distribution of aid; yet it also seeks to govern, to control state security, and militarily, to operate internationally. It holds official leadership positions within the Palestinian

government, and yet it also continues to operate clandestine, paramilitary initiatives. Hamas isn’t the only actor within Palestinian politics. It must compete with other militant organizations and with other non-militant groups vying for the ability to both govern and define Palestinian national identity.

In addition, the rightward turn in Israeli politics coupled with recent high profile violence on Palestinians carried out by Israeli citizens without much interference from the Israeli military or security forces has been escalating tensions. For years political scientists like Amany Jamal (who gave a talk arguing as much at Muhlenberg not too long ago) have warned that this escalation in tensions, the collapse of international negotiations and the inability of non-violent protest or legal cases to curb this tide pointed ominously toward the possibility of renewed violence. Hamas, like many radical Islamist organizations, views itself as engaged in a legitimate anti-colonial struggle, and the aforementioned developments have, perhaps, heightened the pressure to do something. Israel, for its part, views itself as engaged in a legitimate

struggle for sovereignty and security. In both cases national identity has made conflict more likely and more difficult to resolve.

In the end, the pathway forward hardly seems clear to me. At first, I thought that the horrible truth of this massacre and response was that it benefited the status quo, politically, in both Israel and Gaza. I thought that it would benefit the far-right that has been on the rise in Israel, which has called for the full expulsion of all non-Jews. I thought it would benefit the Islamists of Hamas because it would distract from their inability to govern and remind the Palestinian public of the brutality of Israeli military rule. So far, at least the former isn’t panning out as there appears in polling to be some loss of support for Netanyahu and his governing coalition, and increasing support around the centrist Benny Gantz, who entered a unity government after the Hamas attack. What I don’t know is how Israel can resist a wider military incursion into Gaza. The kind of political will it would take to avoid this is almost unimaginable. What I don’t know is how political leadership, let alone individual militants,

can be held accountable. What I don’t know is how this attack will do anything to change the underlying dynamics that have essentially isolated Gaza from the world since 2006, or the underlying dynamics that have contributed to an ever-escalating set of West Bank settlements that have effectively achieved the goal of the post-Oslo settler movement and ended any talk of a two state solution—a vision as old as the Peel Commission Report from 1939. What I don’t know is how this conflict is to be contained so that it doesn’t spill over into new fronts, undermining an already fragile region that has seen more than its share of war, state-failure, insecurity and refugees.

It’s a perilous moment. It would be understandable to meet it with the search for clarity and simplicity; to define good v. evil, right v. wrong, just v. unjust. But like most things, politics more often requires in us the embrace of complexity and ambiguity.

By Brian Mello, Ph.D., Chair & Professor of Political Science.

Taylor Swift has a new boyfriend?! Who cares?

By Emily Nally
Contributing Writer

Breaking news! Taylor Swift is rumored to be dating Travis Kelce, tight end on the Kansas City Chiefs, whose brother plays for the Philadelphia Eagles, and blah blah blah blah. As a huge Taylor Swift fan, I am here to admit that I'm tired of listening to every person on the planet talk about this new romance involving Swift.

To me, it feels like more people are concerned with Swift's love life than they are with her actual career, which, by the way, could not be more successful than at this moment. Swift's Eras Tour has been



Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce. Photo credit to @taylorswift and @killatrav on Instagram.

one of the most highly demanded tours by fans, topping \$1 billion in sales, the first concert to ever reach this amount. In fact, The New York Times has recently published an article about Swift's and Beyoncé's, tour, stating how Swift's concert could create around \$4.6 billion in economic activity in North America alone. Taylor Swift is literally helping our economy from her tour, with each city having an economic boom after she visited. Let's also note Swift's Eras Tour movie, which has reached number one at the box office, giving fans the opportunity to enjoy her concert in a literal movie theater. Plus, Swift is releasing 1989 (Taylor's Version) on Oct. 27. 1989 was one of the most influential pop albums to hit the charts, and one of her most streamed albums. Therefore it is easy to assume that her Taylor's Version will dominate the charts the same way. With all this in mind, it only makes me wonder why people are purely focus-

ing on her relationships rather than her actual career.

In many cases, people use celebrities' relationships as an escape. I can understand why people find excitement and intrigue when it comes to celebrities' love lives, but when we put that in front of their literal career, then that's a problem. By centering someone's worth and importance purely around who they are dating, you take away from their actual accomplishments. I mean, let's note all of Swift's accomplishments, which consist of 12 Grammy Awards, three being Album of the Year wins, a Primetime Emmy Award, 40 American Music Awards, 29

about them, they don't say things like "he's had too many girlfriends," or "he needs to stop writing so many breakup songs." What they do instead is praise these musicians' successes. It is interesting how the focus is on the women in the music industry, not the men. How about we quit these double standards. Taylor Swift has purely been growing her career, doing nothing but trying to get people to focus on her music, and yet after all her efforts, people still are only seeing her as a woman who dates around. I imagine it to be exhausting putting so much work into your craft, only for people to be focused on a superficial aspect of your life.

So let's obsess over Taylor's music instead! Stop making the same joke about how she's going to write a song about Kelce because that's what she does, it's getting old. The fact is, Taylor's music is loved and adored by millions and of fans all over the world—she is the first female artist to reach 100 million monthly listeners on Spotify— and the music doesn't just focus on her exes. Her albums each take on a different era of her life, incorporating new genres and concepts. Not every song is about a breakup. Plus, even if it was, why do people care so much? Think about all the men in the music industry who write about their relationships; it's a topic in music that has been used by countless songwriters. Again with the double standards.

If we want to talk about Taylor Swift, or any musical artist—especially women, let's focus on their career as a musician, not who they may or may not be dating. While it's okay to be intrigued, there is a limit to how much you should obsess over it. Take a pause from all the drama circulating around Taylor Swift, and just direct your attention to the actual success she has achieved, and if you want to critique her, make it about something legitimate, not some sexist take on her new boyfriend or her music. That goes for any artist, they're not just there for our entertainment, they are human beings. Now I hope this is the last article you read regarding Swift and Kelce, because it's time to focus on more important things.



Aquarius (January 20 – February 18)
Walking directly under Victor's Lament gets you five years of bad luck. Reverse it by wearing all red and doing yoga next to him to prove your loyalty.

Pisces (February 19 – March 20)
You're not so much a golden retriever as an orange cat: generally loveable, but when it's your turn with the brain-cell who knows what will happen.

Aries (March 21 – April 19)
If you get up on the wrong side of the bed, just get back in bed and get out the other side! Sometimes the solution is simpler than it seems.

Taurus (April 20 – May 20)
The universe is giving you a break this week. What a Grand-Little Surprise!

Gemini (May 21 – June 20)
If you're going for the "Christian Girl Autumn" aesthetic, try not to restrict yourself. Remember, the crusades were also technically a Christian Girl Autumn activity!

Cancer (June 21 – July 22)
The Sunday scaries are just a state of mind. That's probably why you keep getting them on Wednesdays.

Leo (July 23 – August 22)
Don't bother with the tired old flower-petal-picking "they love me, they love me not" routine—try biting them and see if you can get away with it. For legal reasons this is a joke.

Virgo (August 23 – September 22)
This week you feel out of place, like you're wearing a jacket and tie at an Applebee's. Get over it! Do some exposure by wearing a tux and going to grab some of those dollar margs (or some chicken tenders if you're underage).

Libra (September 23 – October 22)
Did you maybe listen to Katy Perry's "Firework" a little too much as a child? That might explain some things.

Scorpio (October 23 – November 21)
If you don't already own the "Sorry for having a fat ass and correct opinions" sweatshirt you should probably buy it. Not necessarily because it's true, but because it definitely fits your specific brand of cockiness. It also might be true.

Sagittarius (November 22 – December 21)
Every day is taco Tuesday if you put your food in a taco shell! Push the limit of what defines a white person taco.

Capricorn (December 22 – January 19)
This week you feel like a lost sock in the dryer of life; remember, just because we don't know where the socks go doesn't mean it's somewhere bad. Embrace the adventure.

FROM **MAP** PAGE 3

being a positive experience. "[W]e talked about life and transitions to college academically and athletically."

Sam Roberts '27 was also matched with his coach, Men's Soccer Coach Sean Topping. "We met and it actually was really helpful. We talked about making sure that I had an easy adjustment coming to the College— life in the classroom, on the field and socially, that I had a good environment outside of the team... It was nice talking to him as a mentor and someone I can reach out to."

Janis concluded that "It's heartening to know that most of the first-year students I connected with have stated

that they'd give their first few weeks of life at Muhlenberg a 4/5," and that as a college life coach, "it's been nice to learn about the perspectives from other first-year students." Albert also noted the ways in which this new initiative brings ease and aid to academic advisors: "Academic advisors now can feel more reassured that there are a number of folks watching out for the students they are advising."

Upon hearing of the program during an orientation announcement, Orientation Leader Ariana Handelman '25 remarked that "It seems like a really good system," but commented that it may be a bit overwhelming for students. She also added that "In the room, there were sophomores and juniors who ex-

pressed wanting a coach." To that point, Weidner commented that "There will be a MAP for each class year eventually; the other three—sophomore through senior year— are still in development." Weidner concluded with three main pieces of advice for all students: "1) Your major does not dictate your career, 2) Career development is a PROCESS, not a destination and 3) We're your Career Center for life." She encourages all students and alumni to maintain connections with the Career Center, and hopes that these one-on-one coaching sessions will be the starting point for that life-long relationship.

Muhlenberg men’s soccer sets goals for Centennial Conference win

By Lucy Atwood
Rookie Writer

The Muhlenberg men’s soccer team continues to battle and fight for a spot in the Centennial Conference playoffs. On Saturday, Oct. 14, the men’s team played against Ursinus. Midfielder Luke Feeney ‘24 scored within the game’s first minute. The Mules continued to fight hard for the rest of the

game. Goalkeeper Ben Mulford ‘26 made a season-high of six saves and earned his 12th career shutout. The Mules ended the game with a 1-0 shutout against Ursinus, securing yet another conference win. Muhlenberg men’s soccer has a record of 9-2-1 coming in with a .792 win percentage. The Muhlenberg men’s soccer team is ranked third in the centennial conference

standings with a conference record of 4-1-1. The team is fired up and eager to continue to compete for a playoff spot. The Mules will be at home on Saturday, Oct. 21, playing Washington College at 7:00 p.m., three days after they battle Swarthmore the Wednesday prior. This game will be an excellent opportunity for ‘Berg to execute a win and earn more conference points, taking them

one step closer to achieving a spot in the Centennial Conference playoffs. The 2023 Muhlenberg men’s soccer team has a lot of talented young players. Overall, the team has put away 27 goals so far this season. Taylan Akdag ‘24, a forward, has scored six goals and earned five assists, placing him on top as the number-one goal scorer this season. Chris Richards ‘24, a midfielder, has scored four goals and provided two assists so far this year. Last year, the Muhlenberg men’s soccer team won the Centennial Conference championship, beating Johns Hopkins in a penalty shootout. The Mules returned with a sweet 5-4 victory over Hopkins and an automatic bid into the NCAA tournament, ready to do the same again this year. “Last year was a tremendous year for us and it is, and

always will be, something to be proud of,” commented defender Evan Schlotterbeck ‘25. “However, that was 2022. This year, we have been lucky to return a lot of the players that were a part of that championship as well as bring in strong, new guys. Our standard amongst each other has been some of the highest I have been a part of, something we hope will help us as we continue to chase that championship hardware.” The Mules have been working hard daily and are extremely hungry and determined for another Centennial Conference tournament win. The team and coaches continue to show up every day, working hard to climb to the top, hungry to bring another championship back home to Muhlenberg.



Photo by Assistant Photo Editor Kira Bretsky ‘27.

Is there a place for female athletes on ‘Berg’s football team?

With other DIII schools bringing female players onto their teams, the question arises if Muhlenberg will follow suit.

By Katherine Conlon
Editor-in-Chief

In late September, it was reported that a Shenandoah University student, Haley Van Voorhis ’25 became the first female non-kicker to play in a DIII NCAA football game. Van Voorhis plays on the team’s defense as a safety. This story broke through and was covered by national media outlets such as ESPN and CNN. Many lauded this first as a historical milestone for female athletes and women at large. It was later revealed that Van Voorhis was actually not the first woman to reach this accomplishment, despite the surge of media coverage. Two weeks prior to Van Voorhis’s first game, Taylor Crout played cornerback for Fitchburg State. Regardless of the semantics, both Crout

and Van Voorhis’s participation in the traditionally male-dominated sport is historic to say the least. Muhlenberg College’s football team has yet to include a female player. However, Head Football Coach Nate Milne relayed to The Weekly that this isn’t out of the realm of possibility for the team. Milne stated that, “certainly if there were females up for that (joining the football team), absolutely. That would be something we were intrigued with.” Milne continued noting, “I don’t think our campus is a male-dominated culture campus...And so I think it would probably be easier than we think to have a female join our program. I think our players are respectful across campus, I think our players under-

stand the importance of having females in important roles on our campus.” When asked if he felt that a female athlete could bring something different to the team, Milne stated that “historically, male athletes aren’t willing to ask for help or share feelings and things like that. And maybe a female athlete would be more willing to say, ‘Hey, looks like Joe is having a bad day’ where Joe may not say something...But maybe she would pick up on it a little easier.” While bringing female athletes into the realm of college football is a big win from the vantage point of representation, health and safety concerns arise. Assistant Professor of Public Health and author of “No Game for Boys to Play: The



HALEY VAN VOORHIS PLAYING FOOTBALL FOR SHENANDOAH UNIVERSITY’S TEAM PHOTO CREDIT TO @HALEYVANV ON INSTAGRAM.

History of Youth Football and the Origins of a Public Health Crisis” Kathleen Bachynski, Ph.D., centers her research on sports-related brain injuries. When discussing the risks of tackle football, Bachynski expressed, “unfortunately, brain injuries are very sig-

nificant risks of a collision sport. And not only do they have the short term risks, but we are also obviously, in the last decade or so, becoming far more aware in public conversation about the long term risks as well, specifically, repetitive or cumulative brain trauma.”



Muhlenberg football remains undefeated

By DYLAN ROSENBLATT
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

The Muhlenberg football team was able to keep a 0 in the loss column after a 28-point win versus Gettysburg College. With their next two games being against Dickinson College and Johns Hopkins University—two teams that currently have a combined record of 11-1—the Mules know they can’t take their foot off the gas.

The Muhlenberg football team extended their undefeated record to 6-0 this season, following a 41-13 victory over Gettysburg College on Saturday, Oct. 14. Coming into the game, the team was ranked as the #21 team in the nation and it wouldn’t be a shocker if they creep into the top 20 following another dominant performance. The Mules have been able to easily win their past two matchups, finishing with a combined score of 91-19 versus McDaniel and Gettysburg College.

Jack Kinerney ‘24— a 2022 All-Centennial Conference first-team selection— spoke about what’s allowed the offense to perform so well recently: “We have talented athletes at the receiver, running back and tight end positions who have been able to make plays for us and really get our offense going. Our offensive line is an experienced group that has played in many important games and knows how to separate a defense. Finally, our quarterback, Joe Repetti ‘25, has been playing really well for us and finds ways to make plays wherever he is on the field.”

Kinerney continued, “In our most recent game against Gettysburg, a lot of the points have to be credited to our defensive and special teams



MUHLENBERG’S FOOTBALL TEAM DEFENDS THEIR WINNING STREAK. PHOTO BY ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY ‘27.

units who forced six turnovers and set the offense up with great field position.”

This Saturday, Oct. 21, Muhlenberg faces off against Dickinson College, a team that has significantly improved from last season. In 2022, the Dickinson Red Devils finished with an overall record of 3-7, which included a 34-21 loss versus the Mules. However, this year is a different story for the team, as the Red Devils have won five straight games, currently hold a record of 5-1, and are ranked third in the Centennial Conference.

While the Mules know this matchup is not going to be easy, the team knows as long as they do what they need to do, they should come away with the win. “As we always say, the Centennial Conference schedule is a gauntlet. Every game that we play,

we have to prepare for it like it’s a championship game. One thing that makes the Mules different from other football programs is that we are getting bigger, faster and stronger as the season progresses. Every day we are getting a little bit better and focusing on improving on the little things,” stated Kinerney.

With hopefully a win against Dickinson this weekend, it’s hard not to look at the Mules’ matchup the week after in which they host Johns Hopkins. The Muhlenberg versus Johns Hopkins matchup has arguably been the biggest in-conference game for both schools in recent years, as one of the two schools has been the Centennial Conference champion in three of the past four years.

Last season, Johns Hopkins was able to get the better of the Mules,

winning 34-27 in a Friday night game in Baltimore. This season, the Mules have home-field advantage and with another year of Repetti under center, the team looks much better in 2023 than they did in 2022. Kinerney commented: “Week eight will definitely be an important step on our championship climb but we like to focus on ourselves because we know that the only team that can beat Muhlenberg is Muhlenberg. Focusing on our daily improvement both individually and as a team is the best thing we can do to prepare for any team that we are playing.” For the time being, the team has to focus on Dickinson who they kick-off against at 1:00 p.m. this Saturday, Oct. 21, in Carlisle, Pa.

The risks associated with tackle football are not unfounded claims. According to New York University, “someone who plays four years of high school football can experience 6,000 to 7,200 subconcussive hits [and] playing four years of college football additionally doubles the amount of hits—12,000 to 14,400 hits to the head before a player has the opportunity to play in the NFL.”

In a study conducted by Boston University (BU), researchers examined the brains of 376 National Football League (NFL) players

and diagnosed 91.7 percent of them with Chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE). This fatal brain injury is caused by continuous blows to the head and according to BU can result in “memory loss, confusion, impaired judgment, impulse control problems, aggression, depression, anxiety, suicidality, parkinsonism and, eventually, progressive dementia.”

So, the question arises: do we want to expose an entire other sect of athletes to the dangers that come along with playing tackle football?

In the past, women have

been regulated to the position of kicker. Bachynski expands on this saying, “the reason you might have noticed the sort of highlight of like the non-kicker is that if girls or women are ever allowed on a team, it was almost always in the kicker role. And I might be sort of spelling out the obvious, but kicker is a lower risk position.”

Not only is the role of kicker a physically safer position, Bachynski describes it as “socially safer,” as well. Bachynski explains the meaning behind her statement saying, “I think there

are more social perceptions of tackling being not as appropriate for girls or too dangerous for girls, or social anxieties about girls tapping boys or getting tackled by boys. And being a kicker doesn’t raise those same kinds of issues.”

College tackle football is a massive enterprise that roots itself in tradition and loyalty. On one hand, the introduction of women into this world can be viewed as a landmark achievement even if it is at the DIII level. Conversely, the sport is dangerous, with inherent risks involved in every

play. There is a level of fear associated with potentially exposing more individuals to these risks. Whether Muhlenberg will follow its peer institutions and bring a female player into its ranks remains to be seen. Will Muhlenberg College have future female football players in its program? It should be interesting to see if this movement continues and how the public’s perception of potential female football players evolves.

Men’s and women’s golf teams compete in Muhlenberg Invitational



Kaylin Foss ‘25 concentrates on her golf round. Photo by Ryan Murray on Zenfolio.

By Noah Berger
Senior Staff Writer

The Muhlenberg golf teams has had a strong start to their fall campaign. One of the major highlights for the team was that they hosted the Muhlenberg Invitational. The Muhlenberg Invitational was a great time for all players to come together in a supportive environment as a team.

Alex McCauley ‘26 talked about his experience with the Muhlenberg Invitational. McCauley said, “The Muhlenberg Invitational went well for the most part. Everyone who could play did and had fun doing it. Some people were unhappy with their scores, but the fall is usually seen more as practice for the spring season anyway. As hosts of

the tournament, we have a responsibility to help other players, within the rules, with course navigation and strategy. We are also under some pressure to perform well at a golf course we are so familiar with.”

Hosting the Muhlenberg Invitational was a good experience for the Mules as it gave them comfort due to the fact they were golfing on their home course. Drew Hynes ‘24, talked about how playing on home turf affects the performance of the team. Hynes explained, “Hosting a tournament is different as it’s much nicer only having a 15-minute drive to the course in the morning. I always enjoy playing in our home tournaments because I am able to invite my friends. I always enjoy playing in front of a

crowd and it’s nice having my friends support me in my athletic competitions.”

Aron Gianchandani ‘24 talked about how the team chemistry has fared so far this season. He commented, “The team chemistry has been well. We all get along together and really enjoy practicing together and giving each other swing tips. The new players integrate very well into the team. After each round everyone feels comfortable sharing how they did and are always welcoming to take advice from teammates.”

Hynes also reflected on the chemistry within the team. He echoed a similar perspective, “Team chemistry is good. We always say ‘hi’ to each other when we run into each other in d-hall or Seegers. We try to coordi-

nate times when we are going to the course so we give each other tips during practice. The new players are integrated pretty well into the squad. I’ve been able to play nine holes with each of the new members. As a senior it’s nice to see that for the foreseeable future Muhlenberg Golf will be a successful program. As all of the new players are dedicated and determined to be successful.”

Given that the golf team is small, they are looking to recruit additional players. Kaylin Foss ‘25 said, “We are still actively looking for female golfers so if anyone on campus is interested in joining, reach out to our Coach Billy Hallman or even let Carly [Kramer ‘25] and I know.”

McCauley highlighted the goals of the team, “We are focused on improving scores and improving our mental toughness. We need to continue practicing, even through the winter, to improve our conference standing for the spring.”

While golf is not a team sport, the Mules focus on being together as a team. Gianchandani said, “One focus in particular for this year has been to just relax on the golf course and not get in our own heads, but to take it one shot at a time. The team would like to continue working on not getting so angry while playing. Our coach has instilled into us the motto, ‘hit it, find it, hit it again.’”

Coming up this week in

SPORTS

Oct. 19 - Oct. 25

Field Hockey

MUHLENBERG

vs

WASHINGTON COLLEGE

Friday, Oct. 20 @ 1:00 p.m.
Scotty Wood Stadium

Volleyball

MUHLENBERG

vs

MCDANIEL

Friday, Oct. 20 @ 1:00 p.m.
Memorial Hall

Women’s Soccer

MUHLENBERG

vs

WASHINGTON COLLEGE

Friday, Oct. 20 @ 4:00 p.m.
Varsity Field

Men’s Soccer

MUHLENBERG

vs

CABRINI

Tuesday, Oct. 24 @ 7:00 p.m.
Varsity Field



PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR MADDIE CILIENTO '25.

Putting the cycle in recycle

Muhlenberg’s new and improved Bike Share Program opens its rack!

By ALEXANDRA DOWNEY
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Muhlenberg’s recent sustainability initiatives, like the discounts for using reusable cups or the addition of the serpentine garden, are continuing through the launch of the Bike Share Program. A collaboration between the Office of Sustainability, Trexler Library, Campus Safety and the Student Government Association, the program’s goal is to expand Muhlenberg’s interdepartmental commitment to community, as well as to have a viable environmental impact. The official grand opening of the program was celebrated with food and entertainment on the front lawn outside Trexler Library on Oct. 20 with faculty of the Office of Sustainability present to answer questions and provide general information to students in attendance. Just an hour after the event began, students began to borrow bikes. This is not Muhlenberg’s first

attempt at a bike share program. The first bike share program was launched in 2016, but the program was run through a third party company, Zagster, that ultimately went bankrupt during the pandemic. Now, the bikes from that program are being reused. The partnership with Trexler Library is intended to expand the repertoire of student services that the library already offers. “The bikes make sense,” Nicholas Cunningham ‘17, public service & student engagement librarian, says. “I think it’s very much Trexler trying to meet the student body where they are, and especially if there is that need for a bike share program, then absolutely we are more than happy to help out with that.” This collaboration between departments makes the process of borrowing a bicycle as easy as taking out a book: go to Trexler’s front desk, request a bike and as long as there is one available, all you have to do is swipe your student ID and sign a waiver, and you will receive a helmet and key to a bike lock. All of the available

bikes are kept outside the front entrance of Trexler on a bike rack with U-locks. The deadline for returning a bike is midnight the following night, and the penalties for failing to return the bike, or anything associated with the bike like the helmet or lock, follows the same guidelines as overdue library books. There is a \$2 fee for every day the bike is not returned, and every part of the bike is designated a specific price that must be paid if the bike is not returned 72 hours after its deadline. Returning your bike means returning your key and helmet to the front desk and locking the bike back into the Trexler rack. If you happen to be accident-prone or simply anxious about cost, Campus Safety is here to reassure you that there are no fees for taking out a bike or repairs, with very few exceptions. All repairs and tune-ups are under Campus Safety’s jurisdiction, and include such services as tube and tire replacements, brake repairs and derailleur adjustments. The partnership between

disciplines and departments offers a dual purpose to the program. Ashley Henry ‘26, the project manager, believes that “the new Bike Share Program will have more longevity and promote a more sustainable Muhlenberg,” primarily because of its internal operation. Additionally, the Bike Share Program is tapping into campus sustainability efforts. Campus Sustainability Specialist Natalie Sobrinski says that Muhlenberg’s environmental initiatives “requires that we implement initiatives that promote social justice and environmental stewardship. The Bike Share Program strongly supports the campus sustainability community because it enhances transportation equity and reduces our environmental impact.” With Muhleneberg being such a contained campus, bikes aren’t a strictly necessary service. However, the popularity of scooters and skateboards suggests that they aren’t unwelcome. Taylor Current ‘27

shares that, “I personally won’t be using the bike program, but I think it’s a really great idea that a lot of students will benefit from.” Allentown’s hills also make the city a difficult terrain to bike on, but some see it as an athletic challenge. Jordyn Brown ‘27 says that, “I think I would start using the biking program on days where I have spare time and want to get in some exercise.” As Project Manager, Henry also says that future hopes for the program include working with the city. “The Office of Sustainability is currently looking into creating a bicycle route map for the Allentown area in collaboration with the city that will highlight safe routes for members of the Muhlenberg College community to bike to commonly visited locations such as grocery stores and parks.” For questions and feedback, contact bikeshare@muhlenberg.edu.

Arts & Culture
The fifth Radio Riff-Off showcases original songs.

Campus Voices
Harry Glicklin ‘26 talks about tree-hugging.

Sports
Ultimate frisbee team to host home tournament.

THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY

Serving the Muhlenberg College Community since 1883

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CAMPUS SAFETY NOTES

10/11/23
Injured Student—Report of injured student in Life Sports Center, MC EMS responded, student transported to hospital by campus safety.

10/13/23
Bias—Report of bias threats online, no suspects at this time, investigation to continue.

10/14/23
Alcohol Violation—Report of alcohol violation in Prosser Hall, MC EMS responded, Allentown EMS responded and transported student to the hospital.

Alcohol Violation—Report of alcohol violation in Prosser Hall, MC EMS responded, Allentown EMS responded and transported student to the hospital.

Alcohol Violation—Report of alcohol violation in Prosser Hall, students identified and spoken to, alcohol disposed of by Campus Safety.

10/15/23
Alcohol Violation—Report of alcohol violation in Brown Hall, MC EMS responded, Allentown EMS responded and transported student to the hospital.

10/16/23
Vandalism—Report of vandalism in Rehearsal House, emergency call box ripped from wall, work order submitted for Plant Operation to repair.

Odor Investigation—Report of odor investigation in Prosser Hall, HRL also responded, investigation to continue.

Welfare—Report to check the welfare, individuals identified and spoken to, no further incident.

Injured Student—Report of injured student in See-
gers, MC EMS responded, Allentown EMS responded and transported student to hospital.

10/17/23
Hit and Run—Report of hit and run causing damage to two vehicles on Gordon and 22nd streets, APD also responded, no suspects at this time.

Drug Violation—Report of possession of drug para-
phernalia in Prosser Hall, HRL also responded, item brought to Campus Safety and placed in evidence locker.

Injured Student—Report of injured student in Trexler Pavilion, MC EMS responded, student refused fur-
ther treatment of transport.

10/18/23
Sick Student—Report of sick student in Seegers Union, MC EMS responded, Allentown EMS respond-
ed and transported student to hospital.

CORRECTION POLICY

The Muhlenberg Weekly strives for accuracy in reporting and writing, but we acknowledge that mistakes happen. Readers are invited to submit corrections about errors in articles, and they should be submitted to weeklyeditor@gmail.com. Corrections are also brought to our staff’s attention by our own editors and writers. Our staff will review the suggested correction, consult with the author of the article, and issue the appropriate correction. Online corrections are located at the bottom of the article. Print corrections are located within the paper, on the page indicated in the online edition. However, The Weekly does not grant take-down requests for articles.

ADVERTISING POLICY

We request that advertising material be submitted by the Monday preceding publication at 5 p.m. If materials have not been received at that time, the advertisement will not run and the advertiser is still responsible for 100% payment. We reserve the right to decline any advertisement that is misleading, inaccurate, fraudulent, or deemed generally unacceptable. This determination will be made by the Business Staff in consultation with the Editor-in-Chief. The Muhlenberg Weekly maintains a distinction between its news & editorial content and advertising. As such, advertisements will not be accepted if they imitate the general style of The Weekly, intentionally or unintentionally. Examples of this include, but are not limited to: headlines, bylines, fonts, and column-arrangements. In order to make this distinction, The Weekly also reserves the right to include the word “advertisement” on any advertisement that is deemed too native.

Halloween Chili Fest

AT THE GENERAL’S QUARTERS

October 31, 2023

(11 am - until supplies last)

Your Choice of Chicken, Beef, Veggie, or 5 Alarm Beef Chili

Served with Corn Bread



Books and busy

By AMY SWARTZ
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

The boxes seen all around campus, decorated with beautiful designs, have a large mission on the horizon. Their contents, books with soon-to-be new homes, are going to be donated to the Allentown School District. From now until Dec. 1, book drop boxes can be found in Seegers Union, Moyer and Hillel, ready to accept book donations for children in kindergarten through high school. At the end of the semester, everything donated by professors and students will be gifted to different teachers in the district.

This initiative is one of two that the Education Society is currently working on, with the other being their book sale. Over these past few weeks, the members of the Education Society could be found all over campus, including Parents Plaza and the enACT clothing swap, with stacks of books to sell. These books spanned across several genres, ranging from beautiful hardcover classics, to poetry collections and cookbooks. All were sold to the campus community for no more than three dollars, giving local



PHOTO COURTESY OF @BERG_ED_SOCIETY ON INSTAGRAM

Books lined up at the Education Society Book Sale.

book-lovers new, affordable reading material while raising money for an important cause.

They’ve recently concluded their book sale for the semester, raising almost \$1,000 between this semester and last. All of the money raised goes directly to the Allentown School District Foundation where it’s used for Arts and Science programs for students, directly impacting

their educational opportunities.

Maddie Davidson ‘25, treasurer of the Education Society, discussed the source of this extensive library of books and why they were able to sell these books for such affordable prices. She detailed how a local Allentown community member, Phil, donated all of the books the organization used in their book sale. “First and foremost, Phil

wanted the chance to give his books a second home that would love and care for them how he did,” said Davidson. The entire book sale and the subsequent funds that are being donated is possible due to the generosity of one local Allentown community member and his passion for bettering local educational opportunities.

Davidson also emphasized the importance of the specific books being exposed to Muhlenberg’s campus and how the Education Society hopes to align their efforts against extensive book banning campaigns across the nation: “We’re hoping our work directly combats ideals circulated through that [book-banning] campaign—we want our community to have access to all different kinds of material to inspire learning and growing and question-asking and head-scratching and together-time.”

The book drive also served as a symbol of gratitude towards the amazing teachers and administrators that do so much for the Muhlenberg Education Program. Education Society President Anna Holmwood ‘24, explains this appreciation for the Allentown School District. “The book drive has been a great way to connect with the schools in our local community and help support teachers that many of us have worked with through fieldwork placements in the past.

Classroom libraries are a great way to encourage engagement in reading, so if there is anything Ed[ucation] society can do to work with teachers to build their libraries, we are happy to!”

Holmwood discusses the broader mission of the Education Society and their goals. “Education Society is a club for people who are interested in education or are on the education track! We seek to provide a community for those who hope to make change through education, partner with schools in the community and engage our members in conversations about education. We love to emphasize that the Education Society isn’t just a space for those on the education track!”

What’s next for the Education Society? They have a multitude of goals going forward, with their next initiative being to fill the free library in Cedar Beach Park once a week! Their goal is to collect books with diverse identities and to encourage readers in exploring unique experiences. Books being donated in their current book drive are going to be used for this initiative as seen fit. Stay tuned for all of the fantastic, important work that the Education Society is doing for Muhlenberg’s campus, as well as the greater Allentown community.

Trexler Library Student Advisory Board returns to campus

By MATTHEW BARESH
NEWS EDITOR

The Trexler Library Student Advisory Board was a new initiative introduced in the fall 2022 semester. The board aims to incorporate student voices into various library operations. Public Services & Student Engagement Librarian Nicholas Cunningham ‘17 established the board following his experience with the library during his four years at the College.

“I very much remember being a student at Muhlenberg,” Cunningham shared. “I remember sometimes hearing that the library is here for the students, but there wasn’t a built-in way to get feedback, in my opinion. I figured one of the best ways to engage with the students is simply talking to them and trying to figure out different ways we can pull them into library affairs.”

Participation in the Student Advisory Board includes monthly meetings to discuss any concerns with current programs or new initiatives that could be implemented in the near future. The meetings will typically be one hour long and include any students on the board and a pre-determined number of library staff. Meeting summaries will be posted publicly for those not in attendance to stay informed on what was discussed during the meetings. Snacks will also be provided, as “college students

typically forget to eat throughout the day,” Cunningham added, reflecting on his own experiences.

The “library operations” in question include anything from revitalizing certain aspects of the library to starting new programs that students can engage with. In the past year, these initiatives included the revitalization of the Serpentine Garden in partnership with enACT and the reinstallation of the Bike Share Program through the Sustainability Studies Department. Cunningham referenced a particular aspect of the library and its potential for change through the board. “The building itself is just a lot of white paint. Mainly, many of the walls are barren and do not have a lot of art. This board would lead us in the right direction to include student art and identity to make it more of a student space. Interior design is one of the first things that would appeal to students and make the space more inclusive. I’m hoping that one day the library becomes a space that truly reflects the current student body at that time.”

While Cunningham has seen success thus far from the board, he acknowledges the hurdles he and his colleagues have faced. “One of the biggest challenges is being able to talk to the student body and spread awareness about things like the board,” he shared. “The library typically isn’t in a lot of direct communi-

cation with the students, which is why we have started using Instagram rather than email for many programs.”

As aforementioned, the board was started last year and saw success in the seven students who participated. A majority of these students self-disclosed that they were infrequent users of the library, but still wanted to steer the student voice in the right direction and highlight the more social aspects that the library has to offer.

“I want people to know about the academic services that the library provides, but with Muhlenberg being a residential campus, you sometimes have to speak to more than just the academic side,” said Cunningham. “Trying new things, specifically fun things, can hopefully engage the student body with the library in a social aspect. This could help them to be more aware of library affairs.”

“I think it is a nice way to have the school cater to more students’ needs, especially through the library,” explained Sophie Yellis ‘25.

Caleb Wakefield ‘25 shared a similar sentiment, adding “I think overall it’s a really good idea, not only does it give students a chance to be more involved in campus life but it also gives them a chance to voice opinions. I think having that at the library is a really good option because that is where students spend a lot of their time, but it

PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR MADDIE CILIENTO ‘25.



A front view of the Trexler Library.

would be cool to see boards like this in other aspects of campus too. It would be cool to be able to implement more things that students want to see on a wide variety since campus is a place where students live and spend all their time and want to be as comfortable as possible.”

Cunningham is optimistic for

the future of the board and the library as a whole by considering the new perspectives that could be offered. “I’m hoping that the Student Advisory Board will give students more of a voice in these matters.”

SGA votes on new meeting times

By MATTHEW BARESH
NEWS EDITOR

The most recent Student Government Association (SGA) assembly on Oct. 18 featured major topics including Ad-Hoc committees, SGA meeting times and the process of sending out statements to the student body.

The ad-hoc committee is heavily involved with bringing commuter lounges to campus. As previously discussed in a past Muhlenberg Weekly article, commuter students have expressed the need for more support on campus. The committee is continuing to work out the nuances of bringing the lounge to campus but has high hopes for the near future.

The next topic discussed included changing SGA’s weekly meeting times for the future. The existing policy stated that the SGA needed to meet on at least ten Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m. per semester. The Standards committee proposed a change to remove the specificity of the times and days for the meetings. This would allow for more flexibility in the future while still ensuring that the chosen meeting time and day would remain consistent for the rest of the semester. The vote was

passed.

“I am really excited about the new bylaw that we passed, which will allow for more flexibility when we schedule our General Assembly (GA) time for future years,” shared SGA President Jake Forstein ‘24. “For years, it’s been a standard practice that GA takes place on Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m. and that has worked for most students. However, this time is a direct conflict with many athletic commitments which prevents the majority of the athlete community from being able to serve as representatives. While we don’t have any specific plans to move our meeting time, this adjustment allows us to explore that option at the end of the spring semester if we feel like it is necessary.”

Next came the open dialogue conversations section of the meeting. A question was asked regarding how the board decides when it is deemed appropriate to issue a statement to the student body. It was concluded that if there is a crisis that affects a majority of the student population and there is a safety concern, the board will issue an email. This discussion was brought up in relation to the email that was sent out by SGA concerning the events with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Representatives brought up that some students believe the SGA should issue an email with support resources and nothing further than that.

Forstein noted “As we started the discussion on our crisis response policy, I knew that I wanted to go in with the intention of listening as much as I could and turning the feedback into tangible goals and ideas to work from. I’m really glad there were constituents there to voice their opinions and I think they provided lots of great ideas as well. It’s hard for SGA to always know what the student body thinks, so whenever students come to voice their opinion, it is extremely valued by the GA.”

This conversation then opened the floor to debate on where SGA should be sending out messages, with the debate focusing on whether such messages should be sent out on both email and social media or just email. While some believe that it is good to send a message to both email and social media, others feel uncomfortable by it as the comment section could be filled with hate or unwanted opinions. However, some students brought up the fact that when they emailed the school for support, they received emotionless responses. There



was no definite solution to these comments as it was an Open Dialogue Conversation.

“SGA created a good listening environment to have both the representatives and the audience have their voices heard to ensure that the conversation is ongoing,” commented Harry Glicklin ‘26, a student in the audience during the meeting.

“Our Standards Committee, which is open to all and meets Mondays from 7:15-8:15 p.m. in the Student Life Suite, is

already working on revisions that are directly based on the conversation we had at last week’s GA,” Forstein said. “If you are a member of the Muhlenberg community and you want to share your thoughts about anything that you think SGA could have an impact on, please join us at any of our General Assembly meetings in the Great Room, every Wednesday at 5:30!”

Additional reporting by Katelyn Snyder ‘25

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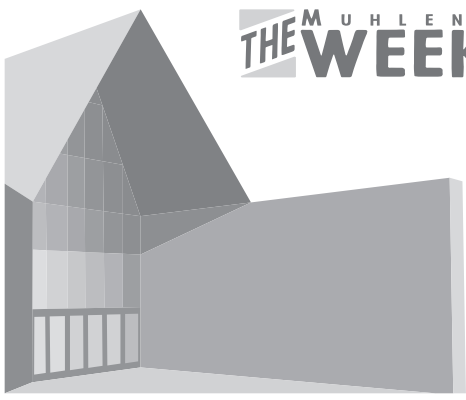
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“Imagination is nothing without doing.”

-Charlie Chaplin

A documentary “Take[s]over” Muhlenberg and inspires action

By SHAIYAN FEISEL
ASSISTANT A&C EDITOR

On Oct. 18, a film screening of the documentary “Takeover” and discussion with Director Emma Francis-Snyder and Producer Miguel “Mickey” Melendez occurred. Director of Film Studies and Professor of Media & Communication Amy Corbin, Ph.D., stated that this is a “true example of a multidisciplinary event.”

“Takeover” is an Emmy nominated and Oscar shortlisted 38-minute documentary that explores the 12 historic hours on Jul. 14, 1970 where 50 members of the Young Lords Party (Puerto Rican activist group) stormed into the rundown Lincoln Hospital in the South Bronx, drove out their administrative staff, barricaded entrances and windows and made their cries for decent healthcare known to the world. This documentary highlights actions that ordinary citizens can take to change the conversation—and the country.

Francis-Snyder is a New-York based activist and filmmaker. She is a winner of the 2017 Brooklyn Film Festival Exchange pitch, invited to the 2020 Big Sky Documentary Film festival and awarded a grant from the Ford Foundation. Francis-Snyder’s film “Takeover” had its world premiere at the Tribeca Film

Festival and is now available to stream through The New York Times Op-Docs (short opinion documentaries).

Melendez is a first generation “Cuban-rican,” who helped create the national Patient Bill of Rights and is the co-founder of the Young Lords Party in New York. The Young Lords Party’s objective is to confront the root causes of inequality and discrimination within the Bronx. The hospital takeover wasn’t the first time they assumed control of a substance. In fact, there were many staged occupations and takeovers led by the Young Lords that presented social injustices through savvy media coverage and other means.

An example of another important takeover was seizing an X-ray unit for Tuberculosis (TB) testing. The X-ray kept going to other boroughs of New York City, mostly in neighborhoods that were white, industrialized, educated and rich. There was a tuberculosis endemic going on in the Southern Bronx, but testing for tuberculosis was scarce to none. The Young Lords decided to seize an X-ray truck when it was in Brooklyn and sent it over to the Southern Bronx so people in their neighborhood could be tested. The two technicians did not complain as there were never many people in line waiting for TB testing before.

The positive media coverage was key in making sure that nobody would get into trouble for taking ahold of the truck.

After the takeover of the hospital, it took seven years for the city to rebuild Lincoln Hospital in the South Bronx. The aftermath of the takeover also included the drafting of the Patient Bill of Rights and Responsibilities, which allows for people to be treated with dignity and respect while being a patient at the hospital. Before the drafting of the bill, the Young Lords felt as if their voices and concerns regarding their healthcare were not addressed. The Patient Bill of Rights and Responsibilities is now crucial in healthcare and health insurance settings. As Young Lords member Felipe Luciano said in the documentary, “A revolutionary act cannot be erased.”

Francis-Snyder was inspired to create this film as she tried to protest at her school but failed to successfully accomplish this. This was because “we told the administrators that we were going to protest, so the administrators shut it down immediately.” This caused Francis-Snyder to look into the civil rights movements along with Black and Latine movements. Through her findings she was able to delve into research regarding the Young Lords.

Corbin stated that she “teaches fiction films. While I was on

sabbatical last spring it was my goal to watch more films. I was in the Op-Docs section of The New York Times and I stumbled upon this film. I wanted other disciplines at Muhlenberg to watch the film and see if it was relevant to their respective departments,” so I contacted director of Latin and American Caribbean studies Elaina Fitzpatrick-Sifford, Ph.D., Public Health Professors Chrysan Cronin, Ph.D., Kathleen Bachynski, Ph.D., and Jacqueline Antonovich, Ph.D. and other professors who teach documentary films, such as Lora Taub, Ph.D. and David Romberg, Ph.D.

Corbin was able to get into contact with Francis-Snyder who was “very accessible. Her film played at the Tribeca Film Festival which is pretty hard to get into,” according to Corbin. Francis-Snyder said yes to coming to Muhlenberg, but she also wanted to bring Melendez. Corbin loved this idea as it showed documentary ethics. Corbin said, “if you’re telling someone else’s story you really have to involve them and if possible you have to be equal collaborators. If you’re showing the film, somebody should be there with the filmmaker.”

Corbin remarked, “I was so impressed with the bravery of these teenagers to be so brave to do this and to organize it. I thought it would be inspiring for Muhlenberg students to see; these are people around college

students’ age.”

Cronin, director of Public Health, vocalized that “Public Health sponsor[ed] this because it highlights the inequities and inequalities in healthcare access that are still prevalent in this country today. It’s important to tell stories like these to raise awareness of this issue.”

“The documentary does an amazing job of recreating the event such as the reenacting footage, it’s not common in documentaries. It’s authentic and uses black and white film to make it look like footage from that area. It looks as if someone had a camera in the hospital!” Corbin said.

The film was released in 2021, while the COVID-19 pandemic was at its height. At the end of the documentary, there was a section discussing Lincoln Hospital during the pandemic. Lincoln Hospital still lacks equipment for proper care of residents, and Black and Latine people died at twice the rate compared to white people due to COVID-19.

Khadijah Chaudry ‘26 stated that “I’ve never heard of the Young Lords before watching the film. I think our public education system needs to do a better job in educating us on Black and Latine movements.”

Artist Spotlight: Dan Harel ‘26

By EMMA HOWSON
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

An artist dedicated to his craft, Dan Harel ‘26 has been acting since his childhood. Harel has done a bit of everything when it comes to the performing arts. He’s dabbled in dancing and singing, but he has a gravitational pull to acting.

“I’m definitely an actor first. Acting’s been something that I have been passionate about for, forever. I started acting when I was very young, about the age of five or six. I did some on-camera work, just at my daycare. And it just kind of stuck around, I’ve been doing drama since. I think I’m definitely more passionate about my acting and I enjoy it more.”

Harel’s passion for acting lies in the joy and creativity he is able to gain from it. Harel speaks to how acting is able to provide him with an outlet of creative expression that he has been able

to both revel in and learn from. Acting is an integral part of Harel’s life, and the experiences and opportunities he has gained from acting have helped him navigate his life.

He expresses, “It’s a great outlet for an escape from the real world. It gives you an opportunity to go and explore and figure out different points of view of other people and it really makes you an empathetic person. Even with conflicts I have with my friends, it’s always easier to look at their point of view because sometimes I’ve had to embody people with different ideas and perspectives and thoughts. So, I’d say acting is an escape from my everyday life, which is awesome because it gives me a chance to explore creatively and imaginatively, but it also gives me an outlet to see different outlooks and points of view.”

Harel has been immersed in acting during his time at Muhlenberg so far, he has been

involved in the Muhlenberg Theatre Department’s “Freedom to Fly,” two plays in the Red Door Play Festival, “Crazy Eights” in the fall of 2022 and “Emotional Baggage” in the spring of 2023 and played a role in a studio show spring of 2022, “Llorona.” He has acted in each of these productions, with a wide range of roles, as he played a man suffering from a heart attack in “Emotional Baggage” to an ICE officer in “Llorona.”

Harel reflected on the fondness he felt when being a part of “Llorona,” a student-run production, and how he was able to be challenged artistically in an environment he felt comfortable in. He states, “I think the collaborative experience that I had with Ale[jandra Cepeda Bátiz ‘23] and Ruhani [Singh ‘23] was incredible, and they had such a direct vision they wanted to achieve, and they were just so passionate about it, it brought up

SEE **ARTIST** PAGE 7



Dan Harel on the set of short film “Right Behind You” with director Sophie Stein. Photo courtesy of Sophie Stein ‘25.

Fifth annual Radio Riff-Off

By ALMARAH URMAN
ASSISTANT LAYOUT EDITOR

On Friday, Oct. 20, 2023, eight Muhlenberg singer-songwriters took to the Red Door stage to compete in this year’s annual WMUH Radio Riff-Off competition. The event is an original song competition that lands the first place winner a recording session at Shards Recording Studio in Bethlehem and a headlining concert on campus.

All eight contestants brought their A-game, some of them debuting original songs in front of an audience for the first time. There were several prizes up for grabs, with the honorees of the night being the first, second and third place winners, picked by the judge’s panel, and the audience-voted fan favorite.

Taking third place was Ingrid Melin-Shearer ‘25, who went home with WMUH merchandise as well as a certificate.

“I went to Radio Riff-Off last year and was blown away. I thought to myself ‘wow, this is so cool, I wish I could do this.’ I loved the creative vibe that atmosphere fostered, and everyone was so talented,” stated Alena Ruckh ‘24, second place winner, who will perform as the opener for the Radio Riff-Off concert WMUH will host in January.

“When this song came to me over the course of this year, I found myself singing it a lot in my free time because it

was often in my head. Sometime in September, I was in a CA classroom with my partner who was doing homework and he overheard me singing the song and playing piano, asked if it was mine, and I said yes. I said it would be cool to do Riff-Off, but I worried I was too inexperienced. He encouraged me to submit an audition for the competition anyway, so I did, apprehensively. In hindsight, I am so grateful for that support, as Riff-Off was an incredible experience,” reflected Ruckh.

Ruckh will be opening for the first-place winner, Hannah Winter ‘27, who competed first and blew it out of the water. Winter will headline the concert, showing off all her original music.

“I started writing music when I was 12 years old. I was really inspired by the individuality of musicians like Kacey Musgraves and other young women I saw writing and creating such beautiful things. I had spent most of my life expressing myself through theater, but around middle school, I started to feel really lost in that world. Songwriting, and creative writing in general, really pulled me back into myself creatively,” said Winter, who came into Muhlenberg as a songwriter.

Winter and Ruckh will spend the next few months planning their sets and writing more songs.

“The best concerts I’ve been to are always a labor of love and a projection of who

that artist is, and I’d love for people watching to feel like they’re in on the joke. I also have some incredibly talented friends who I’d love to sing with. That would mean the world to me,” explained Winter.

Marilyn Rajesh ‘26 also came out on top, stealing the audience’s hearts and taking the Fan Favorite win. Walking into the event, everyone received a ticket they could use to vote for their favorite performer or song. As the winner, Rajesh was immediately invited back onstage for an encore performance.

“As cliché as it sounds, I am my own [worst] critic, but I was mostly participating with the intention of having fun and just using this as a motivational factor to keep writing songs and make more of my own music. The audience was super supportive and when I saw them wave their phones with the flashlights on during my second song, I kid you not, I almost teared up on stage. It was a wholesome moment and a memory I will always cherish,” she commented.

Radio Riff-Off was not just a fun opportunity for the performers to showcase their music, but a fun atmosphere for the audience.

“I loved Radio Riff-Off! I think writing original music requires so much skill and talent and it’s so amazing that we have an outlet for students to share that here at Muhlenberg! It was also just such a fun show and the crowd was so excited about everyone’s music. The emcees



Radio Riff off winners, Hannah Winter ‘27, Alena Ruckh ‘24, and Ingrid Melin-Shearer ‘25. Photo credit to @wmuhfm on Instagram.

did an awesome job keeping everyone’s energy up and the attitude positive,” remarked Dina Maltser ‘26.

“It was really inspiring to see all the amazing talent of our campus community. Everyone did an incredible job! They should all be really proud of themselves and their songwriting,” reflected Jo Pitera ‘25.

See Winter and Ruckh live at the Radio Riff-Off concert WMUH will host in January.

“Riff-off ended up being such a lovely, accommodating space for myself and the other contestants, which was so helpful in this process. [The emcee] Harper Hogan ‘25 made me feel so comfortable when I was feeling nervous, and I am so thankful to her for that! My friends who helped

me throughout the process are also the best, and the whole experience really made me feel so loved by the new people I’ve met. It’s been such an awesome time,” said Winter.



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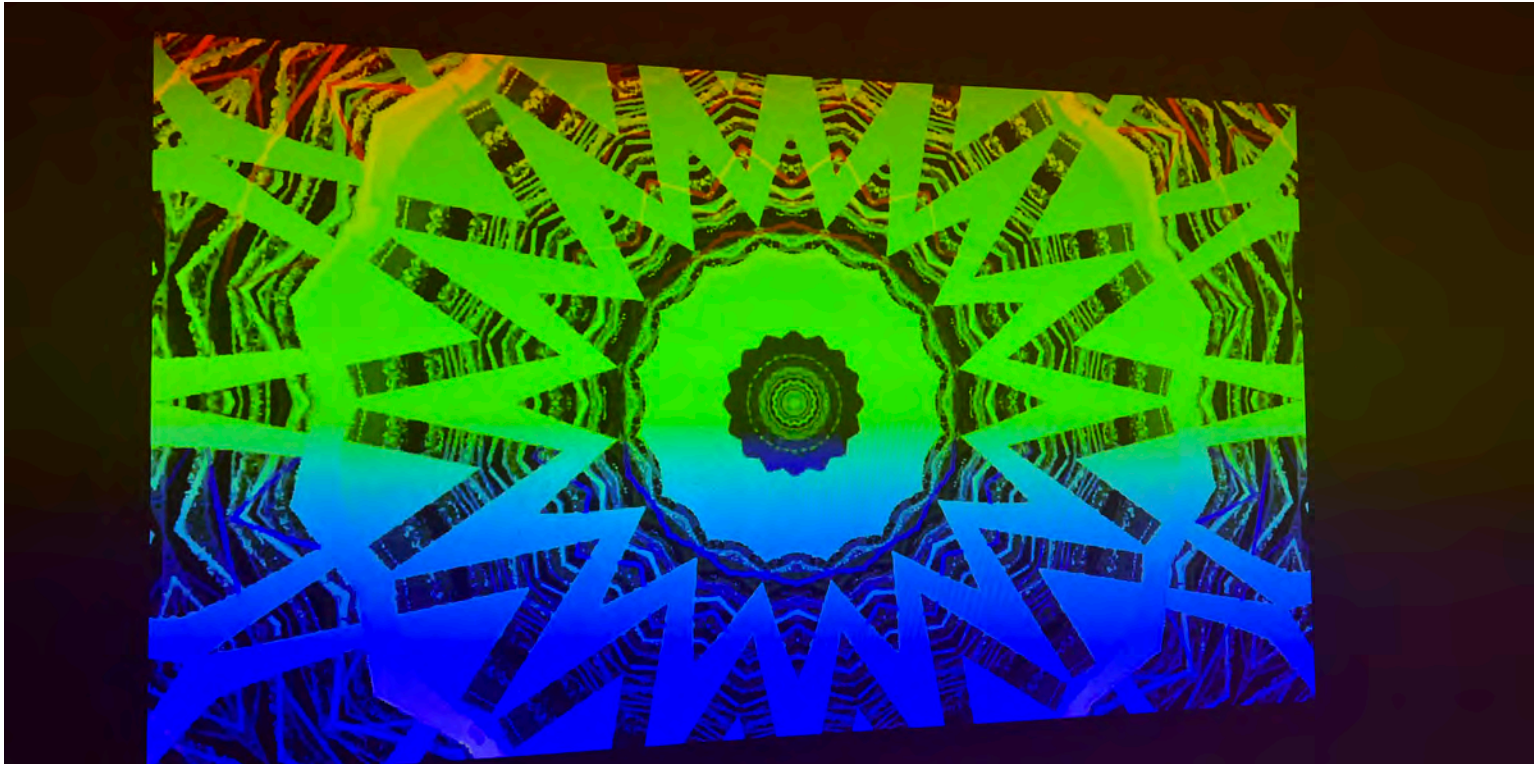
A new exhibit with art by Myk Eff

By ADDISON STAR
STAFF WRITER

The art exhibition “Analog Alchemy: Exploring Nonlinear Aesthetics” opened Oct. 16 and will be viewable until Nov. 17 at the Martin Art Gallery. Analog Alchemy features a series of multimedia pieces created by Michael Filimowicz, Ph.D., who goes by the name Myk Eff, as an artist. Myk Eff is a senior lecturer at the School of Interactive Arts and Technology (SIAT) at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, Canada.

The exhibit was curated by Jessica Ambler, director of the Martin Art Gallery. She says that she “was incredibly impressed with Myk Eff’s diverse range of interests and scholarly pursuits which include everything from experimental video and creative writing to net art and digital photography.” Ambler also organized the artist talk which took place on Oct. 18.

In addition to going to the exhibition, I attended Myk Eff’s talk, which was enlightening and interesting. During his talk, Myk Eff spoke about his artistic process which includes using VJ Loops, a new form of silent cinema that is produced for electronic music performances and Video Rhythmologies, which combine digital video stills from the VJ loops into large scale canvases. He spoke about his process of creating work which included complex mathematical equations, which he has higher-level mathematicians do for him. Myk Eff focuses on more traditional forms of image synthesis by using tools that emulate the process of analog tools



rather than digital. He went on to say that digital tools don’t typically exhibit nonlinear behavior in terms of their output which is why he uses software that emulates analog circuits, because they add in additional distortions which are key to the creation of his work.

The exhibition is a combination of print and digital media. The digital pieces are shown on the white walls of the gallery using projectors. When you first walk into the gallery, the room is darkened, with the main sources of light coming from the three projectors placed around the room.

My favorite piece was “Projector 2: Mandalas,” which moved through a series of geometric configurations of symbols. The piece was reminiscent of kaleidoscopes; the piece was mesmerizing, I could have looked at it for hours.

The print pieces were created using video rhythmologies. A unique part about the creation of these artworks is that they are produced in either 16K or 32K resolution. Digital art is typically too low resolution to be made into large prints, however, the higher resolution allows for this. Ambler said, “The prints are actually digital composites– what the artist calls ‘tapestries’– of stills from the video works in the show.”

Some of the art is very geometric and pattern-focused and then there are pieces that seem more random in nature. The interesting aspect about these pieces, like “Video Rhythmology No. 21: Engereia,” is that they use basic shapes like squares, but within the squares, the colors and shapes are more free-flowing and abstract, which Sasha Dzhani-bekova ‘27 remarked on.

A brand-new exhibit featuring art by Myk Eff. Photo by Anna Hanley ‘25.

Dzhani-bekova said that the piece “reminds me of thermal imaging and how hotter things are a different color than cooler things.”

One piece that displayed the geometric nature of the exhibit was “Video Rhythmology No 31: Method.” This piece is monochromatic purple which helps to focus the viewers’ attention on the shapes of the piece, rather than the display of colors, which can be seen in “Video Rhythmology No 29: Pastel Light District.” Maya Schlegel ‘27 noted that she “really liked the colors, it’s very put together and visually pleasing to look at.” Caitlyn Montgomery ‘27 found the work “aesthetically pleasing.” Emily Nally ‘27 said that it was “something I’ve never seen before.”

The final part of the exhibition and my personal favorite

was “Ylem.” In the gallery was a black tent and inside the tent was “Ylem.” The darkness of the tent allows you to fully appreciate the beauty of the piece as you sit back on beanbag chairs and watch “Ylem” appear before your eyes. The tent helps the viewer not only focus on the VJ Loops playing but also block out the light and movement from the projectors in the Gallery. In combination with the chairs, which allow the viewer to sink into their seat the way that they sink into the Loops, the tent works to capture the attention of the viewer and make seeing “Ylem” a truly artistic experience.

FROM **ARTIST** PAGE 5

the energy in the room, and the cast was great, and the dynamic between everyone was awesome and I had a really great time. And it’s definitely a part I haven’t gotten to play before, that kind of officer and authoritative figure.”

While Harel has been heavily involved in the acting scene on campus and has been wholly dedicated to his art, he has found some challenges in how to manage his artistic pursuits with his life outside of acting. He says, “I think a lot of Muhlenberg students are guilty of this, and I am guilty of this as well, that we over-extend ourselves. And balancing theater and school, and other extracurriculars has been something I am navigating through and I haven’t fully figured out where the balance is yet. And some of the parts I am playing currently are taking a heavy toll, especially with everything going on in the world, and in my home, Israel. So that’s something I’m trying to navigate through emotionally and work-wise.”

Harel is currently cast in a fall 2023 studio production as Orsino in “Twelfth Night (Or What You Will),” and is the lead in a new short film by Sophie Stein ‘25 and co-produced by Raymond Ceres ‘25 titled, “Right Behind You.” In the film, set in the 1980s, Harel plays a character named Eli, a Jewish track athlete who has to deal with and overcome an antisemitic teammate. Harel speaks to how his role of Eli is interconnected with his own identity, and how in playing this role he has had to reflect on his own experiences with discrimination, and how he wishes to dedicate this performance to his identity and the people who he loves and everyone around the world who has been subjected to antisemitism.

Harel adds, “When we were just starting off the process, it was a lot of deep diving into personal things I’ve encountered in the past in terms of antisemitism, but with the rise of antisemitism and with everything happening in Israel, it has taken a harder toll and I have

definitely decided to dedicate this performance to my family and my people in Israel that I care about and that are currently going through a really hard time. I feel a sense of responsibility to make sure that our story teaches a valuable lesson, and brings light into the impact of such harsh antisemitism.”

“I think portraying a character in such an impactful [film] is something that is super super important. I think in my past acting experiences I haven’t gotten a chance to do any sort of critical acting. When I’ve been in other shows, it’s always been fictional characters, but this is something that is a little more real and a little more critical of social and political issues. I’ve been very excited to be able to do such a critical [role], especially in a time like this,” he continued.

Harel details his thought process behind auditioning or going out for certain roles and productions, explaining that in the past he tended to gravitate towards roles that require a personality similar to himself, however, his time at Muhlenberg

has challenged him to take on different types of roles. He says, “In the past, I’ve enjoyed a lot of comedic relief roles. I see myself as a very funny and outgoing person, so I like portraying those on the stage because it makes me a lot freer in my acting choices. But since I got to Muhlenberg, the opportunities I’ve been given are a lot more serious roles, which I’m not against, it’s a lot more impactful. So, I’d say things that are speaking to me are usually either very comedic or are a part of something larger than just the theatre space.”

Harel’s journey with acting has stemmed back as far as he could remember, and being an actor and a performer is an integral part of who he is. He states, “I have been wanting to be an actor since I was four years old. My parents brought home a little puppet theater, so I would put up little shows with my dad for my mom, so that’s how I fell in love with performing. And then I was put in a daycare where it was a performing arts daycare and they were very big about letting kids create and letting kids be

imaginative and we did visual arts and performing arts, and all of that. Even when I moved to the States, something that stayed by my side, something that has been consistent is theatre.”

“Even in my fourth-grade production, I showed up to the audition not speaking any English and I told them ‘I just want to be a part of it. I don’t really care what I’m doing.’ So they ended up putting me as an extra soldier, which I was more than okay with because I just wanted to perform.”

Reflecting on his lifelong journey with acting, Harel recounted how acting as an art form has been important to him through and through and it has been the viewing acting as a true art form that has been the most gratifying aspect, he says, “I love when people recognize you for the work you do. Being known for your art, and being recognized for the characters that you play and being known for the work that you do is something that is very rewarding.”

Campus Voices

A statement from the Campus Voices editors

To our dedicated readers,

We would like to announce that our section, previously named “Op-Ed”, has officially been renamed to “Campus Voices”! We are excited to expand the variety of pieces that we put into the section. That being said, let us hear your voices, campus! Submit to us at bergweeklyoped@gmail.com.

We hope to hear from you soon!

Best,

Your Campus Voices section editors, Megan Hansen and Lily Magoon

I hugged a tree for 30 days... and how we’ve both grown

How an act of environmental appreciation led to education on humans’ impact.

BY HARRY GLICKLIN
COPY EDITOR

My main resolution for the fall semester was gratitude—reflecting deeply on thankfulness and truly expressing gratitude toward others at any possible convenience. The exercise of feeling and showing appreciation made me think more deeply about the things that I’m thankful for. One of the biggest ones was trees.

As an avid “Phineas & Ferb” viewer in my early childhood, middle childhood, teenage years, college years—you get the picture, I longed for that moment of sitting under a big tree, taking in the outdoors and “carpe diem-ing,” seizing the day. I’ve also grown this semester to become increasingly aware of, and appreciative of, spending time outside and taking in all of nature’s beauty. So, I made it my mission that for the first 30 days of fall, I would hug a tree every day.

This was an undertaking that excited me initially and proved to be very meaningful. Immediately, when wrapping my arms around the first tree, I felt an unprecedented sense of comfort. The tree, whose circumference was significantly larger than my own wingspan, seemed to take in all of my stress, leaving me relaxed and at ease. Scientifically, this is a real phenomenon—that trees emit a sort of vibration, as well as an increase in hormone levels within the body that promote emotional

awareness and calmness.

Ever since that first hug, which was not at all deterred by the fact that it was actively raining, I looked forward to hugging a tree each day. I began to worry, however, about the effect of this relationship on the tree. Was it mutualistic? In short, maybe. Trees do not benefit greatly from this interaction, other than the argument that the carbon dioxide emitted from humans is closer to the tree, allowing it to continue photosynthesis. There are also theories that trees are able to remember this form of communication, and feel “happier” because of it. However, there are opportunities for harm.

One of the main concerns is the effect that humans can have on the environment surrounding the trees—being inconsiderate of what plants or species they may be stepping on, as well as what could possibly be removed or added to the trees when touched. While acknowledging that this research isn’t extremely in-depth, the ideas presented made me think more critically about our overall impacts on the environment, especially with actions that directly benefit us, such as hugging trees. As much as we say we’re thankful for our natural environment, are we truly treating it with that same sentiment?

From that moment on, somewhere around the two-week point, I paid much more attention to the art of tree-hugging. I looked with sincerity at the ground below, locating a safe

path toward the tree, and acting more gently toward all of the nature in that area.

It’s worth noting that this self-help experiment wasn’t done in secret. Friends would ask me daily if I’d hugged my tree for the day, or would watch as I veered off from our walking path to metaphorically say thank you, wrapping my arms around the trunk of the tree. The rest of the world would go silent.

On day 30, I questioned whether or not I’d continue with this habit. Ultimately, as much joy as hugging trees brought me, I wouldn’t enforce it as a daily chore, but rather as an as-needed practice. Hug a tree when it’s important or warranted, but also allow it the space to flourish without human involvement. Appreciation can happen from afar, but it doesn’t hurt to show it sometimes too.

What started out as an attempt to become something I’ve idolized since childhood turned into an exercise in gratitude, and an opportunity for education. While continuing with practices that improved my overall mental health, I was able to promote an appreciation of nature to my immediate Muhlenberg community and was able to “branch out” in my understanding and perspective on the Earth.

In conclusion, I would encourage everyone to hug a tree, either metaphorically or physically. Find something that brings you peace every day. Find something in nature that brings you comfort. Find something in

the world that makes you question your impact, and work to improve it. Learn, engage, question and of course, grow.



Discourse in Devastation

Inspecting Recent polarizing discourse on campus

By KABIR BURMAN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

In many ways, the situation in the Middle East is a reflection of the complex lines of differences that have divided humanity for centuries. Religion, region and legion alike have forced us to pick sides in our response to what has been a devastating week for many of us on this campus. We have seen our friends fear for their families, grieve their losses and pray for peace—all while many of us attempt to understand a divisive issue we may not fully comprehend. Yet, an essential aspect of that endeavor is the ability to freely speak with our peers and faculty alike— an opportunity that has come under threat these past few weeks.

“If you don’t have to be scared for your friends or family in the region, you don’t deserve to have an opinion about it,” a student who’d like to remain anonymous, posted on their Instagram story. While one can empathize with the frustrations those students may experience, it is essential to note that in today’s hyper-connected and globalized world, the answer may not be as simple anymore. We must recognize that whether it’s a military general overthrowing an elected government in Myanmar, a virus outbreak in a wet shop in China or Putin invading a small West-

ern European country, developments halfway across the world are likely to still impact you here in the states. While your peers may not have an “equal” stake in the conflict, it would serve us well to recognize the effects we all feel regardless.

Once we have recognized our collective stake in the issue, it becomes imperative for us to begin having active conversations surrounding these issues. For some, it could be an individual endeavor to learn more about the subject, while others may choose to be more actively engaged and ask questions during discussions in class and around campus. Whatever it may look like for you, we must avoid sweeping this issue under the rug for fear of being “wrong” or “politically incorrect.” Instead, walk up to your friends and ask them what they know or maybe try to follow the news on recent events. In any case, disengagement from the topic is detrimental and we must stay informed on global developments. Growing isolationist and apathetic tendencies have always preceded some of humanity’s worst actions and we must avoid repeating history.

In opening these spaces for discussion, we must recognize the importance of continuing to engage, especially when we may disagree with one another. “I am willing to lose friendships based on people’s views on the ethnic

cleansing of Palestinians. You either support it or you don’t,” remarked Shajnin Howlader ‘27 when conducting an interview last week. While this particular conflict is known to cause intense, emotional, visceral reactions and cause rifts in relationships, it is also more critical than ever to remain open to differing perspectives. Not only does this allow for an open dialogue surrounding an important contemporary issue, but it also helps us look inward to find pitfalls and weaknesses in our own understanding of the issue. Without this, we are likely to find ourselves in misinformed echo chambers that propagate a single perspective on the matter.

At the end of the day, we are all entitled to our own opinions— but not to our own set of facts. Underscoring all of these points is the emphasis on remaining open to shifting our own perspective when faced with inconvenient truths and the ability to have these difficult conversations at appropriate times. This month’s events will likely not be the last time we may find ourselves at odds with one another. Yet, as long as we keep engaging with one another, and refusing to allow our differences to eclipse our similarities, there is cause to remain hopeful.



Worship Day

By CAYLA MILLS
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

I went to the worship room in the hospital.

No background knowledge,
No prior desire,
Until this moment.

People,
scarce and sacred,
Filled the room.
I looked
In each corner of those who endured.
I sat in the back
Waiting for something miraculous
To overcome me,
Yet, no desire came.

I sat

And sat

And sat
For the day’s time passed by
And so did those in the worship room.

To my knowledge
That still remained,
I left the room

Students gather in Parent’s Plaza for a Vigil for Israel. Photo courtesy of @muhlenbergcollege on Instagram.



*Tiny horoscopes for a tiny campus
Weekly advice and predictions
communicated by Victor’s Lament*

Aquarius (January 20 – February 18)
They say your ears burn if someone’s talking about you. If other things burn you might have a UTI. This has been a public service announcement.

Pisces (February 19 – March 20)
Consider adopting an emotional support pet rock; they require a lot of work, but your mental health will thank you!

Aries (March 21 – April 19)
This week, one of your shoelaces keeps becoming untied. This is karmic retribution for stealing a pencil out of someone’s desk in elementary school. Better late than never.

Taurus (April 20 – May 20)
Stave off seasonal depression by blasting ‘80s hair-bands 24/7. If you don’t have partial hearing loss by spring you’ve done something wrong.

Gemini (May 21 – June 20)
Your Celsius addiction is becoming a problem. You’re not going to do anything about it, but it needed to be said.

Cancer (June 21 – July 22)
New bullet journal idea for you: at the end of every day, go back and write down a list of all the songs that would’ve been performed if your life were an episode of Glee.

Leo (July 23 – August 22)
Be your own Manic Pixie Dream Girl—put hot sauce on your popcorn and start getting really into French films.

Virgo (August 23 – September 22)
The world is your oyster: slimy, unappetizing, but occasionally containing something cool and shiny.

Libra (September 23 – October 22)
Giving up is ok if you really commit to it. Don’t give up on giving up though, that’s just sad.

Scorpio (October 23 – November 21)
It’s time to change your passwords—frankly it’s shocking nobody has hacked you yet.

Sagittarius (November 22 – December 21)
This week, you feel the urge to cook something special; try sprinkling extra shredded cheese on top of your microwave Kraft mac and cheese.

Capricorn (December 22 – January 19)
This week, you wake up, put on a cute little outfit, then immediately change your mind and put on joggers and a sweatshirt. At least you tried!

Game delay to game play

Muhlenberg field hockey plays Washington College after a five-hour delay.

By Lexi Sipos
Assistant Sports Editor

The Muhlenberg women’s field hockey team faced more than just pre-game anxiety. On Saturday, Oct. 21, the players faced Washington College at the home of the Mules. Unfortunately, in Washington’s pursuit to get to Allentown, Pa., they encountered enormous traffic. As a result, the 1:00 p.m. game was delayed until 6:00 p.m. Midfielder Devon Eastlack ‘25, commented on the game delay. “The five hour delay definitely was a big factor affecting the team. One main focus was to keep everyone’s mind in the right mode and staying focused, even in the uncertainty of whether the game was still going to happen that day. I think we did a great job of staying focused and keeping everyone accountable for doing so during the waiting period. I don’t think the game delay affected the team in a negative way and we were all very happy with the outcome.” The team persevered through

the time delay and leaned on their family and friends for support. Mikayla DeMichele ‘25 commented, “We made sure to fuel up at the dining hall and I personally spent time with my family before heading to the locker room around 4:15 [p.m.]. The team definitely stayed focused and locked in for the game.” In turn, their energy and mindset going into the game was unwavering. In the end, the delay and cold weather did not affect the Mules in the slightest. Muhlenberg beat Washington College 3-0, adding a win to their record. Two of the goals were scored by Abba Diglio ‘26, and the last goal was scored by Zabelle Aslanian ‘25 in the fourth quarter. Eastlack gave praise to Diglio in stating, “She definitely stood out. Diglio had two of our goals and was the spark we needed.” In addition, Eastlack recognized other players’ hard work, “[Diglio] and Erin Disandro ‘26 are the leading point scorers in the conference! Another recognizable player is Maddie Schwartz ‘27. She’s really stepped up to become our starting goalie and has been improving with every game and practice, recording two shutouts in the last three games.” These individuals, along with the team’s combined effort, pushed the girls to finish strong till the last whistle. In the last few games of regular season play, the team is focused on their conference performance. DeMichele said, “We are currently focusing

on finishing out our last two conference games strong and leaving everything on the field. With that, we are doing the best we can to make it into the playoffs, but it all really depends on how the other teams perform as well. It honestly comes down to the very last day of conference play and the very last game. It is anyone’s game on any given day! We have to be mentally and physically strong and channel our teamwork in order to find success!” She continues about the team’s energy for the rest of the season, “We are absolutely excited and ready to finish out the regular season with two more wins. I think we are more than capable and prepared to show everyone what exactly ‘Berg Hockey is! I have never seen more hard work, discipline and dedication from a team!” It is very evident that the future of this team is bright, and their spirit is positive in moving into the end of their regular season play. Ultimately, the Muhlenberg field hockey team translates all of their hard work from practice into game play. This game mentally and physically tested the players on Saturday and they successfully passed to win one of their last home games this season.

PHOTO BY ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY ‘27.



The women’s field hockey team plays at Scotty Wood Stadium.

Women’s soccer celebrates their 14 seniors

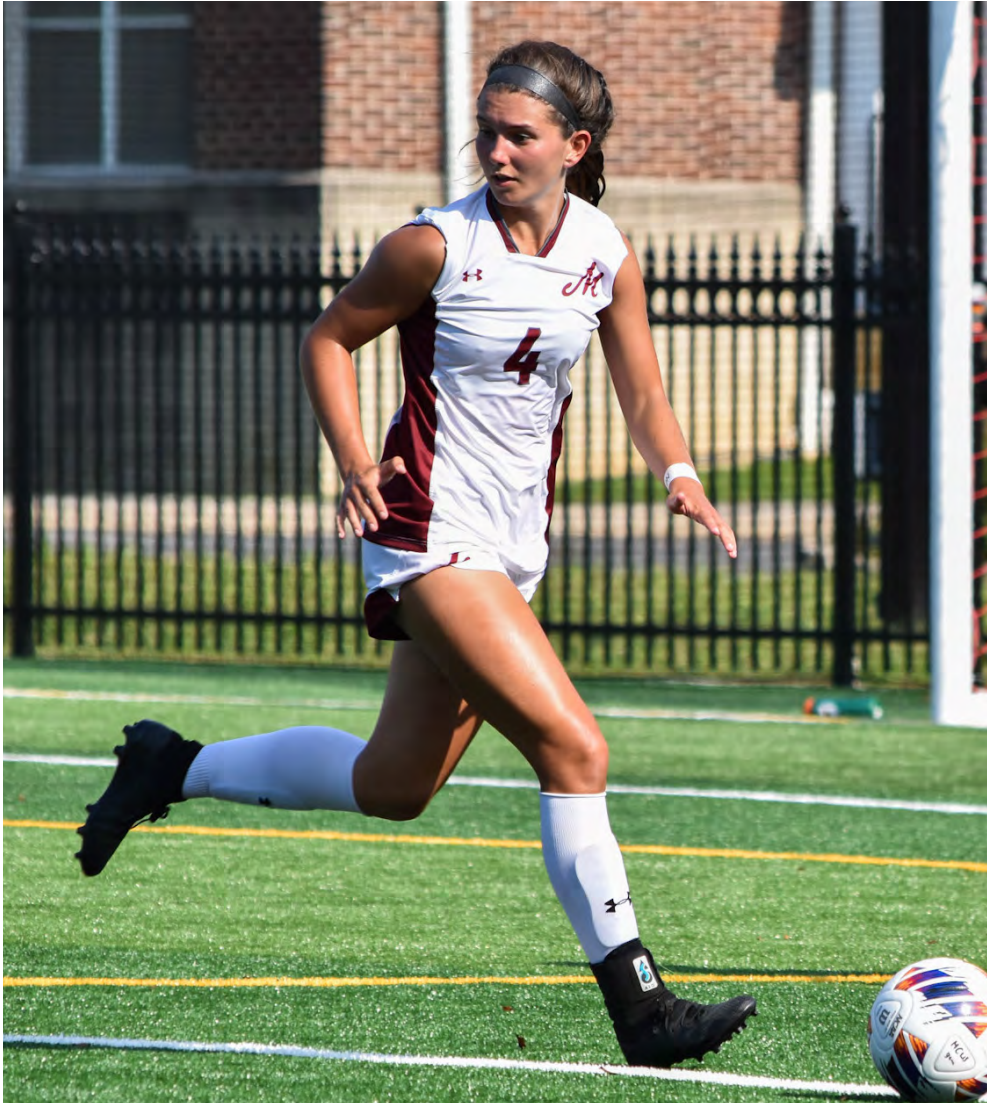
PHOTO BY ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY ‘27.

By Elisabeth Loisel
Rookie Writer

The Muhlenberg women’s Soccer team honored their 14 seniors on Saturday, Oct. 21, on Varsity Field in a competition against Washington College. Despite a passionate comeback, the Mules fell short of the Shorewomen in a 3-2 loss. However, this outcome did not impact the day’s significance or what it embodied for the entire team. Senior Day encompasses an immense amount of emotions for seniors celebrating one of their last athletic competitions and underclassmen honoring their leaders’ final hurrah. Bri Astbury ‘24 recounts these unforgettable moments and their impact, saying, “Senior Day is always a day filled with emotions. From the minute you walk into the locker room, you’re being celebrated by your underclassmen with decorations, posters and dancing. The energy level was different than it ever has been before and that showed on the field.” Senior Captain Olivia Oberman ‘24 echoes these thoughts. “Saturday turned out to be such a beautiful day for us to compete as a team on our home turf. The fourteen of us have made memories here that will last a lifetime and it was definitely bittersweet to have that nostalgic feeling on the back of our minds all day. It felt so special

to play alongside our families on the sidelines, while they reminisced about all the little moments along our soccer journeys that lead up to our college senior day. Our parents, coaches, the juniors and the underclassmen put in so much effort to make the day even more memorable for us. We will never forget it.” Whether able to fully compete or sidelined by injury, the importance of the day was contagious. Lexi Sipos ‘24 reflects on the game’s meaning to her as an injured player unable to fully participate in the game. “The day embodied more than just a game. It was a day for the seniors and for the team to come together and be thankful for everyone’s work to play this sport. From the sidelines, I was able to see everyone’s hard work from practice come out in the game. I was so proud of everyone and to be on this team with these amazing girls. With tears in my eyes, I looked at everyone and was grateful to be here with this team, coaching staff and families.” Sipos is one of three seniors with a season-ending injury. All were still honored for their four years of dedication and hard work by starting the game alongside their classmates and were removed shortly after the opening whistle. Resilience is a characteristic of this team and one that shined brightly on

SEE **SOCCER** PAGE 11



Olivia Oberman ‘24 takes the field.

Squirrels forage for victory on home turf

Ultimate frisbee to host first home tournament.

By OLIVIA OBERMAN
SPORTS EDITOR

Have you heard of Muhlenberg’s ultimate frisbee team, the Flying Squirrels? They are a co-ed intramural team on campus and have gained a ton of participation over the past few years. Currently seeking new members, the team has shared a few informative details on what it means to be a member and how

easy it is to join! It is important to note that participants do not need any prior ultimate frisbee experience to join the team. President Jonathan Mindiak ‘24 reiterates, “Just show up! The best way to meet the team and get acquainted with the sport is coming to a practice. There are no tryouts! Also, if you reach out, anyone can be added to the weekly email. We practice Monday 8-10 p.m., Wednesday 9-10 p.m. and Thursday 8-10 p.m. In the fall we have two-three tournaments and in the spring it is much more competitive with four to six.” What is the team culture like? Mindiak offers insight, “The team culture is a mix of having fun and team progress. We form



Muhlenberg’s frisbee club plays their first scrimmage.



strong bonds on and off the field, and we all push each other to do our best. We understand everyone is at different places, so as long as you show up and do your best, that’s what matters. In the spring it does become a bit more competitive, and we do put in the work, but that doesn’t limit the strong connections we build. I’ve certainly gained a lot from playing ultimate here. Progress in the sport, leadership devel-

opment and even strengthened discipline. But if there is one thing I’ve enjoyed the most, it’s the people. Some of my best friends are people I’ve gotten close to because of frisbee. I’m very grateful for the time I’ve had with this team.” Being a Flying Squirrel (in addition to being a Mule) clearly means being a part of a passionate team, too. Go make new friends and memories by trying

it out! The team is hosting their first home tournament on Sunday, Nov. 12. Ten schools will be competing in the double elimination style tournament taking place on all three athletic fields. The first games will sound off at 8:30 a.m. and the others will follow after. Make sure to stop by and support. If you want some Flying Squirrel merch, they will be selling it there too!

FROM **SOCCER** PAGE 10

Senior Day, with the Mules’ second goal of the game coming at the 84-minute mark. Astbury recalls the action taken by the team to exemplify this characteristic. “After being down 2-0 at half, we all came together and decided we wanted to take control of the game. Scoring those two comeback goals were huge for us, I know I’ll never forget how I felt in those moments. We were all just having fun. The final result was unfortunate, but the positive energy and excitement that I felt when we scored those goals are definitely things that I won’t forget.” Head Coach Kathy Prescott continues to explain how their resilience can be credited to the team’s season-long goal of winning and additional Senior Day excitement. This helped to create a naturally competitive environment where the team found themselves able to ignite their enduring spirit. “Our goal as a team is always to compete at the highest level we can and try to win. It was a great atmosphere with so much support from all of the family and friends in attendance and I hope that the seniors and the team felt that support before, during and after the game. As has been our goal all season I hope that in every game we play we continue to learn and

grow and recognize the progress that we are continuing to make.” Coach Prescott also expressed appreciation to the entire team for making the day full of unforgettable memories and special moments amongst such a strong unit. “I’d like to thank the seniors for all of their contributions to the program and also thank all the younger players for helping make the day so special for them.” Regardless of any outcome, this day proved to be more than just a game, but rather an unforgettable day for the senior class, their families, and the entire Muhlenberg Women’s Soccer team. “The post-game celebration that was put together by the junior class and their parents was beautiful. It was definitely something that made Senior Day a night my family, teammates and I will cherish forever,” says Astbury.

PHOTO BY ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY ‘27.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MUHLENBERG ATHLETICS



STEPPING UP TO THE PLATE

Muhlenberg softball and baseball teams compete in their ‘fall ball’ play days during off-season.

By EVAN SCHLOTTERBECK
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Although Muhlenberg’s fall athletic teams find themselves toward the end of their regular seasons and have fought and clawed their way through challenging opponents, other teams on campus have been putting a lot of effort behind closed doors toward preparing themselves for their respective campaigns. Two of those teams are the softball and baseball squads.

NCAA Division III teams have a limited off-season compared to Division I and Division II programs. Muhlenberg’s athletic teams are allowed 15 official team practices and one day of competition against another school(s). In contrast, schools at other levels are only capped at hours per week, not total sessions. These rules may be changing soon, but for now, the Mules must remain eager to play the cards they have been dealt.

The Muhlenberg softball team

traveled to Bloomsburg University for their fall ball match-up, playing two nine-inning games against the Division II foe. “Overall, our play day went well considering we were playing against a DII team,” said Lauren Siesky ‘26, pitcher and outfielder for the Mules. “It was tougher competition than most teams we usually play, and we kept up with them throughout both games. We learned that we have to keep our energy level at a maintainable level throughout the game instead of starting with too much energy where we can’t sustain it.”

It is crucial for teams to play against high-level competition during the one chance they get in their various off-seasons to prepare for the official season in the best way possible. Another meaningful aspect of the fall for this team is incorporating their new teammates into the team culture. “The freshmen have integrated fast into our team dynamic,” explained outfielder Gillian Zack ‘24. “They were very

excited and open to meeting all of us and being part of the team. We try to have the team over the house to watch football games, eat, hang out and find other times to get everyone together outside of softball.”

Along with many intrasquad scrimmages to replicate realistic game situations, much of the Mules’s off-season consists of team practices, lifts, conditioning sessions and even water polo. Picking up batting signs and plays from the catcher, working on specific skills like hitting in two-strike situations or turning quick double-plays and getting a jump on reinforcing team values are all things that have proven to make a difference come spring-time.

When asked about what those values look like, Zack commented, “Some core values on the team include genuinely being happy for our teammates’ success, being involved both on the team and within the college community, being respectful of the people around you and giv-

ing 100 percent of whatever you may have that day at either practice or a game.”

Like the softball team, Muhlenberg baseball played a higher-level opponent for their fall ball games, taking on the Division I Lehigh University Mountainhawks in two seven-inning bouts. It was a valuable experience for the Mules, who are eager to clean up a few little details and continue to work hard as the off-season comes to a close. On the game, Team Captain Jonathan Toth ‘24 shared, “One thing we learned is that we have a really tight group of guys this year. Although we’re competing against one another for playing time, I think every one of us has the chance to play valuable innings in the spring. This leads to more competition, which will only make us a better team.”

The team hopes to foster a welcoming and encouraging environment going into the spring, with the desire to maintain high standards throughout the sea-

son from every player on the roster. Creating that space within a team, especially with the new players, is essential to fostering success. “I think the incoming guys have fit in well,” said Toth. “After the first few weeks, they began to settle in and feel more comfortable, which allowed them to demonstrate their abilities on the field. As a team, I think we have been trying to keep each other more accountable in order to produce the best results on the field.”

With several months until the spring season, these two teams have more time to grow and continue to work harder than their future opponents. As the adage goes, the work done when no one is watching makes the biggest difference. So, while the spotlight may not be shining on them yet, Muhlenberg’s softball and baseball teams have been constantly striving to put themselves in the best position to win a 2024 Centennial Conference championship.

Coming up this week in

SPORTS

Oct. 26 - Nov. 1

Volleyball

MUHLENBERG vs WASHINGTON COLLEGE

Sat, Oct. 28 @ 1:00 p.m.
Memorial Hall

Football

MUHLENBERG vs JOHNS HOPKINS

Sat, Oct. 28 @ 2:00 p.m.
Scotty Wood Stadium

Women’s Soccer

MUHLENBERG vs MCDANIEL

Sat, Oct. 28 @ 3:00 p.m.
Westminster, Md.

Volleyball

MUHLENBERG vs HAVERFORD

Wed, Nov. 1 @ 7:00 p.m.
Haverford, Pa.

“...And Jesus Moonwalks the Mississippi” premieres

SEE PAGE 7
PHOTO COURTESY OF MARCO CAULDERON



‘Berg alumni call for professor’s removal

By KATHERINE CONLON
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The Israel-Hamas conflict has amplified discourse throughout the College, with students, faculty and alumni calling on Muhlenberg to respond in different ways. One individual who has spoken out about the issue is Associate Professor of Anthropology Maura Finkelstein, Ph.D. In addition to her social media presence surrounding the conflict, Finkelstein sent out a written statement to the College faculty in response to the College’s words on the matter. In her statement, she noted, “These are terrifying times. But we cannot mourn without also acknowledging the fact that Israel is a settler colonial state, Palestinians have been living under occupation since 1948, and Gaza is an open air prison, the densest and perhaps most dangerous place in the world. On average, more than one Palestinian has been killed by the Israeli State each day this year. For Palestinians in Gaza, Israel’s acts of revenge will likely result in absolute annihilation.”

Through her social media platforms, Finkelstein has been advocating for the Palestinian cause. On Oct. 16, Finkelstein created a post which linked to answers she had created in response to a set of questions posed by The Weekly for a

previous article. The responses incited backlash, with students and alumni commenting criticisms. One Instagram user commented, “What a shame to not only spread lies about Israel but to also perpetrate more division (that’s code for ‘circulate/use/share’ ‘speak out’) during one of the heaviest and most devastating times in our modern day history.” Within Finkelstein’s comment section, Associate Professor of Political Science at Fordham University Zein Murib, Ph.D., was responding to users. Murib was scheduled to give their talk “Terms of Exclusion: Rightful Citizenship Claims and LGBT Political Identity Construction,” at the College on Oct. 26. However, on Oct. 23 it was announced that Murib had withdrawn from this event and the talk was canceled.

The Weekly spoke with Finkelstein regarding the canceled lecture and her own position at the College. She elaborated on Murib’s canceled event saying, “[Murib] saw the comments. And because I had been in a meeting and wasn’t looking at them, they engaged some of the comments. And because it was this flurry, they misread something.” Finkelstein continued, “They thought what they saw was ‘good luck with a world without Zionism or antisemitism,’ and they wrote,

‘that’s my dream world,’ and then realized that actually, the comment was ‘good luck with antisemitism and anti-Zionism.’”

Finkelstein expanded on the fallout that occurred after this “misconstrued” reply saying, “[Murib] reached out to those people individually [and] was like, ‘I think things got out of hand. I know we’re all hurting.’ They got what I would say are pretty ungenerous responses. And at that point we were like,

“So when Palestinians respond - both violently and peacefully, these are not unprovoked attacks.

‘maybe we should move this event online.’”

They eventually decided to cancel the event altogether. Finkelstein explained Murib’s feelings on the matter saying, “[Murib is] really interested in talking about [their] work. [They’re] not interested in talking about this. And it just seems as though the climate at Muhlenberg is just not something that [they] would find productive.” Murib has since made their Instagram

account private.

Examining the campus’ political climate surrounding this issue, Finkelstein noted that Muhlenberg’s student body leans more pro-Israel. She said, “Your parents’ generation and my parents’ generation are pretty conservative and may be aligning as a demographic with the Israeli government right now. But your generation is actually able to see how this is about settler colonialism, racism and genocide. That’s not controversial with your generation in other places, but Muhlenberg is very conservative around this issue. And I know why.”

This is not a topic that Finkelstein has just begun speaking publicly about. On the contrary, Finkelstein noted “I’ve always taught my class on Palestine, written about Palestine and spoken out about Palestine on campus and beyond.” The class being referred to is titled “Special Topic: Borders & Boundaries.” In this class, Finkelstein covers the decades-long Israel-Palestine conflict as well as other instances of mass migration and refugee crises. Despite this, Finkelstein has been criticized for her discussion of this topic, admitting that “I am not a scholar of Palestine... [and] this is not part of my scholarly

ethnographic work.” However, Muhlenberg professors often teach outside their specific area of research.

As Finkelstein’s statements gained more attention, there have been calls for the College to remove her from the ranks of its faculty. On Oct. 29, a petition was posted to change.org demanding that the institution fire Finkelstein. The petition was created by Muhlenberg alumni including Jake Gordon ‘18, Dana Halpern ‘19 and Shira Gordon ‘18. The alumni claim that Finkelstein is glorifying the terrorist group Hamas, creating a harmful classroom environment, spreading misinformation and engaging in cyberbullying with Murib.

In their petition, the alumni wrote, “Because of this dangerous rhetoric, we as Muhlenberg Alumni, demand Dr. Finkelstein is removed by President Harrington at Muhlenberg to protect the students and the college from her radical and hateful views.” They continue, “If this is not addressed we will,

1. Not donate to the college or provide any form of support.
2. We will send this document to every Jewish High School in America to ensure that they know that Muhlenberg is not a safe place for Jewish students.”

When claiming that Finkelstein is glorifying terrorism, the

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Family weekend minus the family.
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Campus Voices

Seat stealing scaries!
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Sports

Mens soccer secures victory.
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Serving the Muhlenberg College Community since 1883

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ADVERTISING POLICY

We request that advertising material be submitted by the Monday preceding publication at 5 p.m. If materials have not been received at that time, the advertisement will not run and the advertiser is still responsible for 100% payment. We reserve the right to decline any advertisement that is misleading, inaccurate, fraudulent, or deemed generally unacceptable. This determination will be made by the Business Staff in consultation with the Editor-in-Chief. The Muhlenberg Weekly maintains a distinction between its news & editorial content and advertising. As such, advertisements will not be accepted if they imitate the general style of The Weekly, intentionally or unintentionally. Examples of this include, but are not limited to: headlines, bylines, fonts, and column-arrangements. In order to make this distinction, The Weekly also reserves the right to include the word “advertisement” on any advertisement that is deemed too native.

CAMPUS SAFETY NOTES

10/19/23
Fire Alarms—Report of fire alarm from cooking in MILE house, system silenced and reset.
Injured Student—Report of injured student in Life Sports Center, student transported to hospital by campus safety officer.

10/20/23
Suspicious Activity—Report of individuals attempting to remove parking sign on Gordon Street, individuals identified and spoken to, no further incident.

10/21/23
Fire Alarm—Report of fire alarm in Robertson Hall, upon arrival nothing could be noted, Officer could not reset alarm, Johnson Controls notified to re-

spond and replace detector.
Odor Investigation—Report gas smell in Robertson Hall, upon arrival nothing could be noted, no further incident.

10/23/23
Alcohol Violation—Report of alcohol violation in Brown Hall, MC EMS responded, Allentown EMS responded and transported student to the hospital.
Sick Student—Report of sick student, MC EMS responded, Allentown EMS responded and transported student to the hospital.
Found Property—Report of found knife, unknown to whom item belongs, knife placed in evidence locker.

CORRECTIONS

We have come to realize that the last sentence “With nothing to say” has been cut out of “Worship Day” by Cayla Mills ‘27 in the Oct 26, 2023 issue. The full poem can be found on our website at muhlenbergweekly.com.
The artist spotlight on Dan Harel ‘26 was written by Shinam Hussain ‘25, who was not credited for the piece in print.

‘Berg got bats

By HARRY GLICKLIN
COPY EDITOR

The Sept. 7, 2023 issue of The Muhlenberg Weekly reported in its “Campus Safety Notes” that there was a “Report of bat in President House, bat found and taken outside.” This was not, however, the first time that an incident like this was reported, as Muhlenberg has a lengthy history of bat sightings and subsequent relocations. In fact, the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) states that there are “Nine species of bats [that] regularly occur in Pennsylvania; six hibernate in Pennsylvania and three primarily migrate south for the winter.” The PGC adds that there are two species that infrequently migrate north to Pennsylvania from the south.

Associate Director of Campus Safety Brenda Lakis states that “it’s always been an issue [at Muhlenberg], especially in our older buildings.” She continued noting that, in their experience, bats tend to gravitate toward these buildings for warmth. “Whenever you have the type of four seasons like we do, it’s starting to get cold out, they’re going to look for areas to hunker down where it’s warm.” Lakis pointed out that buildings such as Brown Hall and East Hall, prior to its renovation, were common spots for bats to seek shelter. She even notes that at one point, there

was such a large number of bats in Egner Memorial Chapel, that they had to “have a professional company come in and go into the attic,” as “you would literally sit in the pews and bats would be swooping into you.”

Ashley Henry ‘26 recalls the moment she and her roommate dealt with a bat: “My roommate and I had three bat experiences while living in Brown Hall last year; however, our first encounter was probably the most memorable. It was our second day of pre-orientation, and we heard screaming from the hallway. We decided to open up our door to see what was happening, and that’s when we noticed the bat flying down our hallway. Suffice it to say it was certainly a unique welcome to the building.”

Lakis made note of the fact that, as Pennsylvania Bat Rescue concurs, “In Pennsylvania it’s illegal to harm, kill or inhumanely remove bats,” as they are headed toward extinction. PGC states that “The biggest threat to our bats during hibernation is a relatively new disease called white-nose syndrome,” an exotic fungus that can cause infections to parts of the bats’ skin, typically leading to death. They add that there’s a roughly 99 percent mortality rate for those species that hibernate in Pa. This infection has caused a significant population of bats to die off, putting some species on the federal endangered species list.

Though they’re not large in population, many bats have come to call Muhlenberg home. As President Kathleen Harring, Ph.D. commented, “We see lots of bats in our backyard, particularly during the summer and are happy to have them since they help control the bugs.” It was due to their continuous presence that on that Saturday evening, Harring quickly identified the creature in her home as a bat, recalling that she may have scared the animal upon reaction, causing it to hide in her curtains. She then called Campus Safety, since she “knew they had experience getting bats out of buildings in a humane manner.”

Lakis commented that upon hiring new Campus Safety team members, they’re taught how to handle bat-related calls. One of the easiest yet least successful strategies is simply to open a window and hope that the bat flies out. “The officers have clear protocols and typically open windows and doors to give the bat multiple ways to escape if it flies around the house,” added Harring. “The Campus Safety officers and my husband opened windows near where the bat was hiding inside the curtains. It helped that we knew exactly where it was at the time.” However, when the bat wasn’t able to leave on its own, “they used two nets to capture the bat and take it outside to be released.” Lakis also stated that they have different gear, including nets and softer grabbing mechanisms to help safely take control of the animal and help it outside. “[Campus



PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR MADDIE CILIENTO ‘25.

The President’s House.

Safety] brought a net that folded inward to trap the bat. It worked, and the bat was safely removed from the building.”

Henry noted, after commenting that on their first incident, “we decided to remove it ourselves... Our efforts succeeded, and the bat was removed; however, it is not something I plan to ever do again.” In some cases, Plant Operations may be contacted or will reach out to a third-party organization for extra assistance.

As far as residential buildings, Lakis stated that students should call Campus Safety to aid in the removal process. If the bat is in one’s dorm room or sleeping area, “Our protocol also states that they should speak with an on-call nurse in the call center.” She says, “Bats are infamous for carrying certain diseases. If they’re in a sleeping area, you’re not 100 percent sure where they’ve traveled.” She concedes,

though, that the likelihood of contracting any disease is low and that the most important thing is for students to contact Campus Safety first, and then receive guidance on the next steps.

Lakis commented on how docile these bats are, and that “they’re just as scared as you are.” Overall, the animals are simply looking for warmth and shelter and are not to be feared by the greater Allentown community. If anything, it’s of utmost importance that they are treated humanely so as not to aid in their population decline, allowing them to flourish and continue their role in the ecosystem.

Students scared by Family Weekend frenzy

By SAMANTHA TEMPKIN
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

The holiday best known for its horrors and frights happens to coincide with the scariest weekend some Muhlenberg students encounter throughout their entire school year: Family Weekend. The combination of Halloween and Family Weekend at Muhlenberg College has the potential to initiate a weekend full of fun or a weekend full of frights for overwhelmed students.

“Family Weekend has been the last weekend in October for many years now, even pre-2020,” says Tim Black regarding the scheduling of Family Weekend. Black, the director of student transitions and family programs at Muhlenberg, is now in his second year of overseeing Family Weekend in conjunction with Ellen Lentine, director of Seegers Union and the student experience. Black explained how Family Weekend, developed in collaboration between the Office of Student Transitions and Family Programs, as well as the Office of Student Life and Campus Events, is scheduled around Halloween for a variety of reasons:

“The College has many full campus events that happen during the Fall semester, including Family Weekend and Alumni Weekend. We have to carefully balance when we are scheduling these events so they are not happening back to back and also make sure we are not scheduling these events too late in the semester, allowing us to take advantage

of utilizing outdoor spaces and having beautiful weather like we did this weekend. We also try to schedule the weekend in conjunction with significant campus activities, such as Theater & Dance productions and athletic events.”

All of these factors made this past weekend the perfect time to invite families to campus, but there is another factor that made the timing even more perfect: that it would coincide with “Halloweekend,” or the weekend in which students would be attending Halloween-themed parties. Many students have hypothesized that administrators schedule Family Weekend at the same time as Halloweekend to discourage students from engaging in possibly harmful activities often associated with parties. Even though the College seems to take preemptive measures against underage drinking during Halloween weekend, some students question the extent to which administrators are able to accomplish this goal. Isabelle Peters ‘24 mentioned, “I think it’s super on purpose to keep us tame for Halloweekend even though it doesn’t work.”

The College does not turn a blind eye to the fact that students enjoy going out around this time, as proven by an email sent out by Dean of Students Allison Williams the Thursday before Family Weekend and Halloween Weekend containing reminders and infographics educating students on drinking responsibly, respecting neighbors and being respectful with costume choices. However, the simultaneous scheduling of

Family Weekend events, plus extracurricular and academic showings, plus Halloween parties leads students to feel a lot of pressure during this time.

“Personally, I think it’s incredibly overwhelming,” said Amélie Parczany ‘25, one student who felt pressure from all these events happening at the same time, even though her parents were not attending. She continued, “My parents and I decided that it didn’t make sense for them to come this weekend because in the past I’m so stressed to see them amongst everything else going on so we couldn’t really enjoy time together.”

Roz Duston ‘24 communicated similar thoughts with the statement, “Horrible idea. Trick or treating often happens the weekend prior and my mom likes to be there and greet the kids. Also, it’s an overwhelming time in the semester for school work, and don’t even get me started on putting a damper on all the student-run Halloween festivities.” These accounts from Parczany and Duston suggest that the scheduling of Family Weekend around Halloween even leaves families reluctant to attend.

The scheduling of Family Weekend and Halloweekend poses some benefits for the student body in that those who prefer not to go to parties have an alternative option with the various Muhlenberg-sanctioned activities they have available to them. Black went on to describe the various events that were scheduled over the weekend, and it is the nighttime events specifically that ensure students



Families gather in Parents Plaza for Family Weekend.

have an enjoyable Halloweekend no matter what they are doing:


“This year we had tons of events for families to enjoy. Friday night we provided trivia and bingo. Saturday afternoon we hosted a ‘Pack the Plaza’ event where we showcased some of Muhlenberg’s talented student performance groups. We also had giveaways like bamboo plants and DIY colorful tote bags. Saturday night was our Muhlenberg Activities Council showcase, where students and families could participate in campus favorites like headphone disco, stuff-a-plush and custom street signs. Overall it was a very successful weekend with lots of positive feedback from both students and families.”

Even so, most students who reached out with thoughts on Family Weekend expressed that it would be best to change the

scheduling so the family events do not coincide with Halloween weekend. Tegan McMonagle ‘26 said, “Moving Family Weekend will give more freedom for scheduling Halloween plans,” while another anonymous student said, “Getting only two days for Halloween with friends but also to see my family was really hard.”

One goal of Family Weekend may be to discourage students from activities they would not do in the presence of their families, but this is limited by the fact that students tend to engage in these activities regardless. This scheduling conflict becomes very overwhelming for students with the combination of their daytime responsibilities and the pressures of nightlife.


Muhlenberg Theatre & Dance presents



Sing Happy!

a Kander & Ebb Project

November 3-5



muhlenberg.edu/seeashow

director
James Stabbs

musical director
Vincent Trovato

choreographer
Amélie Parczany

To the Capitol!

By KABIR BURMAN
STAFF WRITER

It’s not every day that you get a shout-out from Joanna McClinton, the first female person of color to serve as Pennsylvania’s Speaker of the House. Yet, this was the reality for a few Muhlenberg students this past month. Organized by the Political Science department, this trip to Harrisburg was a memorable one indeed, with students sitting in for live sessions in both chambers, interacting with state senators and staff alike, all while learning more about how their government is at work.

Professor of Political Science Lanethea Mathews-Schultz, Ph.D., who led this cohort of students at the Capitol, said, “Politics in the US have become so nationalized that we often neglect state political institutions and elected leaders. But, state legislatures have a significant influence on our day-to-day lives in areas ranging from reproductive rights to education to environmental regulation to gun control.” Going further,

she went on to mention that, “in addition to highlighting the central role of state politics in our lives, I arranged the trip because the PA state capitol is among the most beautiful in the nation—it is truly an awe-inspiring place.”

Whether it was walking through the Capitol’s rotunda, inspired by the St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome, or admiring the ornately crafted Senate Chamber when interacting with Senator Nick Miller, there undeniably remained a sense of disbelief among students. Marissa Scharf ‘24 remarked that “despite my political work in the local area during my time at Muhlenberg, I have never been able to visit Harrisburg and see everything in action. The State Capitol was beautiful! The tour of the building was very insightful, and I loved getting to learn its history.”

Of course, sightseeing was only one aspect of this trip as Mathews-Schultz further explained that her “hope is that students who participated in the trip have a better sense of who their state lawmakers are,



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MUHLENBERG POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPT.

Political Science students visit the State Capitol in Harrisburg.

understand the importance of state politics to our lives and I hope they are inspired to get more engaged in state and local politics.” Assistant Professor of Political Science Ross Dardani, Ph.D., who also accompanied students on the trip, mentioned that he thought “it was a great experience for students to explore the state capitol together and learn about its history while thinking about how a democratic system of government works, especially at the state or local level.”

Emily Gonzalez ‘27 expressed similar ideas, explaining that

she had “decided to attend the excursion to the Pennsylvania State House because, as an individual who hopes one day to work as either a member of Congress or the Senate, I knew that this trip would allow me to get a taste of what a career in government would look like.” Going further, Gonzalez went on to state that “the one thing I took away from this trip is the importance of representation and how the work of these representatives is crucial to our democracy. The very act of experiencing these proceedings and the work that goes into

working as a congress member or a senator has energized my aspirations in the political field.”

For others like Scharf, the trip gave her hope for the future in a different sense. “I was especially glad that so many of the other people on the trip were first-year students. They had so much energy and enthusiasm. I may be graduating in the spring, but I feel confident that I am leaving the Political Science Department—and Muhlenberg’s political sphere in general—in good hands.”

Chenjerai Kumanyika, Ph.D., gives honors lecture

By SAMANTHA BROOKS
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

On Oct. 25, Chenjerai Kumanyika, Ph.D., assistant professor at New York University’s (NYU) Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute, came to Muhlenberg to discuss critical challenges in the practice of narrative audio history with students. Kumanyika focuses on podcasting, and his work has received numerous awards, including a Peabody.

Kumanyika expressed that scholarship is slow to catch up with new forms of media, such as podcasts, and the need for community and collaboration in the field. For years, scholars have been under the impression that the only people who play video games are teenagers and podcasts were not even on their radar. He reflected on his own journey into podcasting, from listening to them in graduate school to now being a podcaster himself, and he stressed the importance of recognizing the work of others in the field.

After attending a podcasting workshop on a small island off Long Beach, Calif., Kumanyika worked with a community to create a five-minute podcast that aired at a local radio station. He reflects on the emotional impact of the experience, feeling a sense of “magic” and connection to the stories and people that he had the privilege to work with. He asked David Weinberger, one of the instructors, about the secret to producing. He responded that you should be sure to pitch stuff

a lot, and when it gets accepted, you will figure out a way to make the deadline.

In 2014, Kumanyika was living in South Carolina when he began to document several significant events, including the Trayvon Martin trial and Michael Brown’s death in Ferguson. After the murder of Michael Brown, Kumanyika says that he and his wife wanted to spend some time in Ferguson to do journalism and advocacy. While in Ferguson, Kumanyika started live streaming.

However, in 2015, Walter Scott was killed in North Charleston, the Mother Emanuel murder took place and the Confederate flag came down. Kumanyika explains that “It was just a rapid succession of things which I was sort of documenting, participating.”

Kumanyika elaborated that podcasting is a unique form of journalism that allows for deeper understanding and empathy through audio-only formats. He discussed the importance of voice and personal connection in historical storytelling, highlighting the role of sound in shaping our understanding of the past.

Kumanyika also reflected on the challenges of objectivity in journalism, particularly in the context of the Civil War and the need to engage with difficult histories in a thoughtful and empathetic manner. Growing up in a Black family, he looked at the Civil War as something you do not discuss. His family did not want to read articles about it and

there was a persisting shame and lack of engagement. He made a point that was critical to a lot of conversations about objectivity that circulate: because so much violence has been done in the name of objectivity, people do not like it.

Another argument that Kumanyika made is that understanding the history of marginalized groups is crucial for a more accurate understanding of the past. He said that “If you do not know the queer history of the civil war, then more objectively, you do not understand.” He also emphasized the importance of considering historical figures and their experiences when telling a complicated history. For instance, he shared a story about Harriet Tubman’s role in the Civil War, revealing new insights into her actions and motivations. In relation to Tubman, Kumanyika reflected on the power of audio storytelling and the challenges of simplifying complex historical events while still conveying their nuances.

He then discussed the importance of bringing history to life through personal stories and experiences, highlighting the significance of understanding the history of the song “Dixie” and its connection to Black people. He shared his experience interviewing the band Carolina Chocolate Drops member Justin Robinson about the uncomfortable experience performing at a historic plantation for an all-white audience and how it made

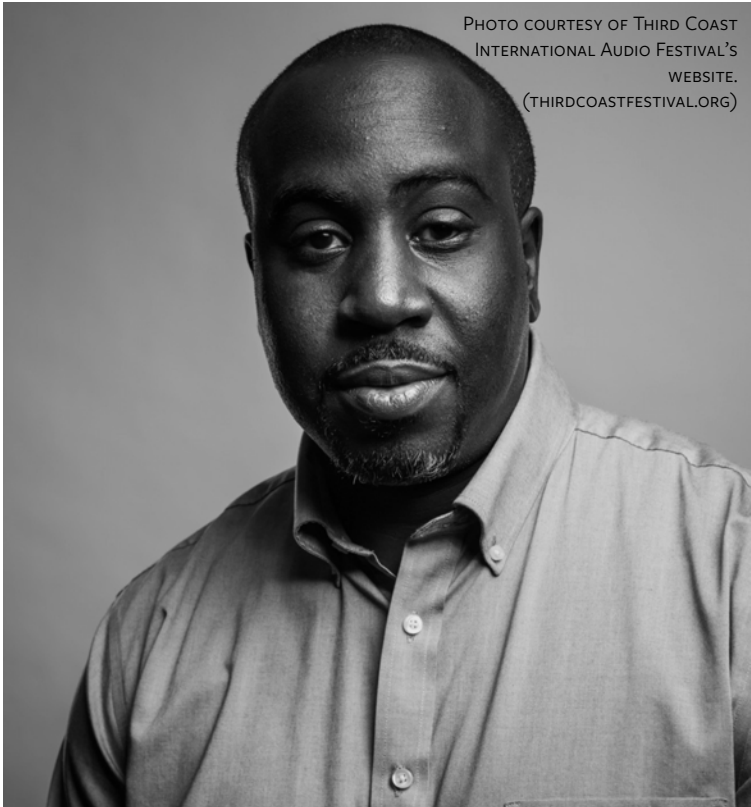
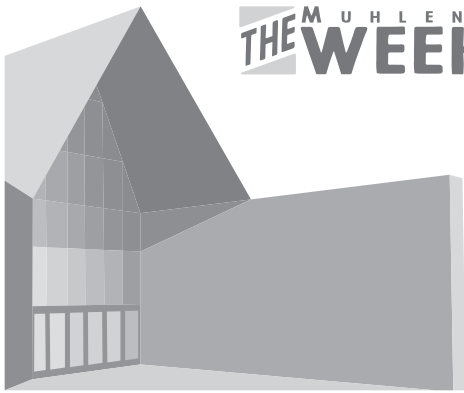


PHOTO COURTESY OF THIRD COAST INTERNATIONAL AUDIO FESTIVAL’S WEBSITE. (THIRDCOASTFESTIVAL.ORG)

A headshot of Chenjerai Kumanyika.

him realize the importance of asking difficult questions in interviews. Kumanyika went on to tell a personal story about his father, a Black activist for civil rights who lived in Charleston and was murdered for his work. Kumanyika explained how the murderer demonized his father after he died, highlighting the racialization of the event. Similarly, he reflected on police history and implicit bias, arguing that the New York Police Department has a history of corruption and abuse dating back to the 1970s and 1980s and that the problem persists today.

When concluding his lecture, Kumanyika emphasized the importance of diverse voices in podcasting. He also encouraged students to continue innovating in the field and expressed concern that venture capitalism may lead to a loss of creativity and passion in podcasting. He explained: “I think it is really early on in the history of podcasting. I think that there’s a lot of innovation to be done. The students I met here at Muhlenberg I think have a role to play in that work.”

THE MUHLENBERG
WEEKLY

/ARTS & CULTURE

“Perhaps the mission of an artist is to interpret beauty to people—the beauty within themselves.”

- Langston Hughes

Finding refuge in music

‘Berg Music Department highlights the refugee crisis through choral works.

By SHINAM HUSSAIN
A&C EDITOR

On Oct. 23, the Muhlenberg Music Department presented a choir concert titled, “Exile, Refuge and Comfort.” The concert was compiled with works dedicated to and inspired by the refugee experience. The performance was meant to bring light to the refugee crisis and provide a sense of hope for those who have been displaced from their homelands.

The concert began with the Muhlenberg College Choir singing “Al naharot Bavel (Psalm 137)” composed by Salomone Rossi (c. 1570-1630). Rossi was an Italian Jewish composer during the late Italian Renaissance. Rossi had written collections of Jewish liturgical music which have been described as an unprecedented development in synagogal music. Rossi’s style of composition for Psalm 137 is homophonic, which allows for each part to be sung in the same syllable at the same time.

This style allows for an easy understanding of the Psalm. The inclusion of this work is to highlight how the author of Psalm 137 might have been exiled after the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE and may have been one of the temple musicians that had been taken to Babylon for their entertainment. Psalm 137 was meant to bring encouragement and hope to the despondents of God after the city of Jerusalem was in ruins.

There were a number of works meant to highlight those who had found themselves displaced due to religious conflicts, as well as works that manifested during contemporary times, showing how exile and displacement from home can come in different fashions. The Muhlenberg Treble Choir sang “Wanting Memories,” composed by Ysaye M. Barnwell, who was a notable member and composer of the African American women’s a capella group, “Sweet Honey in the Rock.” She wrote this piece about loss and comfort after

preparing to sell her parent’s house after their death. The song followed lyrics that reflected the sense of loss she felt, and how without her parents and without her home she was appreciative of the memories she held, and the lessons she was able to gain from a world she once knew to embark on a world that is unfamiliar to her after this loss.

The College Choir followed this piece with “I Dream a World: Chorale,” which was composed by Dave Brubeck and was a piece written by Langston Hughes, who is known best as the leader of the Harlem Renaissance. Hughes was an American activist, poet, playwright, novelist and was a creator of the literary form of jazz poetry. Hughes wrote this piece about holding out hope for a better world, with lyrics that show how he dreams of a world free of racial injustice, where people can exist peacefully, and find home wherever they please.

One of the last songs performed by the College Choir was “Same Train,” which



PHOTO BY EDUARDO AZZATI.

Muhlenberg’s College Choir Performs on Saturday morning.

was described as an African American spiritual arrangement by Alice Parker and Robert Shaw. It is a piece meant to reflect what is known in American history as “The Great Migration” which was one of the largest displacements of people in US history. The Great Migration forced six million African Americans to migrate from rural communities in the South to large cities in the north and west.

African American spirituals are said to predate the time of the Great Migration and in its original form derived from how religion and faith were utilized among enslaved populations, and how it was used as a tool of communication and was meant to express their religious beliefs, daily lives and dreams. “Same

[SEE REFUGE PAGE 7](#)

Family Weekend, minus the family

The inside scoop on what Family Weekend is like for those whose families cannot make it to the events.

By SHAIYAN FEISAL
ASSISTANT A&C EDITOR

Family Weekend was held on Oct. 27-29. This was a time where family members had the opportunity to reunite with their children and get to experience Muhlenberg through the perspective of a student. However, while this time can be special for some people, it can be a dreaded time for others. In order to make up for the lack of family time, some students were able to find a sense of community through their friends and through various activities going on throughout campus.

International student Fuka Aizawa ‘26 stated that “Over the weekend I participated in the Research Poster Presentation. My research is about ticks in Pennsylvania with Dr. Edwards. ISA [International Students Association] and OISS [Office of International Students Support] usually do a gathering where people can talk and chill, but that’s during the start of a short break. But for Family Weekends we don’t do that, so usually I

spend time with friends or study or something like that. I never really felt left out though, I was so busy and tired with studying and sometimes I spent time with my friends’ families. For every short break, it’s really empty, and I usually do things together with others who don’t have families around, but for family weekends, that doesn’t really exist.”

Another international student, Sinhayana Srinivasan ‘26, said, “I just hung out with my friends, it is pretty lonely on parents weekend but I think having my friends with me and just hanging out with them made it better. We went out to eat and did homework together and even though that sounds simple it meant a lot to me!”

Maya Brooks ‘24 voiced, “As someone who lives in Maine, my family has only come to parents weekend once when I was a sophomore. I won’t lie, I feel a little homesick during the weekend when I see all my friends with their parents and pets visiting them on campus, especially when various organizations I am in have ‘bring your parents’ events. Now that



PHOTO CREDIT TO @MUHLENBERGTRANSITIONS ON INSTAGRAM.

Families gather in Parents Plaza for Family Weekend.

I am 21, I would love to be able to go out with my other senior friends and their parents. I find a lot of community in my sorority during family weekend. Not all of our parents come to campus so we get to spend a little extra time together. I also am able to find community with my roommates, and I was included in all the festivities with their parents.”

From the perspective of another student, Esther Klinger ‘25 stated, “Sometimes it’s discouraging when you see your friends’ families visit and you feel like you’re the only one missing out on the experience. However, for me, it’s important to remember that just because my family can’t visit, doesn’t mean that they don’t care about me or don’t want to see me; it’s

simply not feasible for them to drive out to Pennsylvania as often because they live so far away. The families of my friends have been so sweet and have taken me under their wing during events my parents are unable to come to— for example, during move-in, one of my roommates’ families took me out to lunch. Additionally, plenty of other people have families that don’t visit during family weekend, so I find community in my friendships with them.”

Family Weekend can be a different experience for everyone, but ultimately the goal is to find connections with people and spend time with loved ones, which doesn’t necessarily have to be family. Sometimes a familial bond can be formed with friends.

Studio Spotlight: “Fun Home”

By EMMA NORTHROP
STAFF WRITER

“Fun Home” is a musical theatre adaptation of Alison Bechdel’s graphic memoir which explores Bechdel’s sexuality and her relationship with her closeted gay father. Bri Ramberg ‘24 is bringing the play, set in rural Pennsylvania, to the Muhlenberg stage. Ramberg has been behind the scenes of many Muhlenberg productions, including serving as a director for “Things People Say” by Charles Mee, a lighting and costume designer for “The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee” and “Wake” by Ally Duvak and as a scenic, sound and lighting designer for “Vampire Lesbians of Sodom” by Charles Busch.

Ramberg’s interest in directing started in her first year of high school. Having previous experience directing and projection-designing Qui Ngyuen’s “She Kills Monsters: Young Adventurers Edition,” Ramberg accounts, “I came to Muhlenberg ready to explore artistically, with the primary goal/focus being on directing. I’ve spent a lot of time exploring all parts of theatre that would help me be a better director and collaborator and... well here we are!”

In order to direct “Fun Home,” Ramberg had to go through the process of applying and interviewing for a position in the selection of Studios shows. When asked why they chose “Fun Home” to propose, Ramberg recounts, “This wasn’t my first interaction with ‘Fun Home,’ but as I read the graphic memoir and dove into the musical itself, I found myself with so many thoughts.” The play was also an assigned reading for one of Ramberg’s classes, and the discussion Ramberg had and the paper she wrote caused her thoughts to “keep growing,” pushing her towards directing it.

Having experience directing, Ramberg has developed a style that they are applying to “Fun Home.” Ramberg describes the beginning phase of her process as “logistical and practical.” Ramberg outlines, “I started with my own research and analytic work before going into casting. Once we had a cast, we started first by learning music, then we blocked/choreographed different sections of the show.” This structure of the show is unique to Ramberg, as “Fun Home” has no actual scenes. In order to streamline the directing process, Ramberg created their own. With that skeleton in place, Ramberg then began the reflection phase. In reflecting, Ramberg notes, “I start with the big picture and take a step back to process it all, and visualize the ‘thing’ as a whole before really honing in on the smaller ‘pictures’ that make up the whole show.”

Ramberg also employs a “polishing week,” where she can “re-address the vision,” and analyze how her choices are interacting within the piece and to what effect. Ramberg extends their gratitude to Associate Professor of Directing, Performance Studies, Theatre History & Theory Matt Moore, Ph.D., the faculty advisor for Studios. “[Moore] has been a great help as I start unpacking which areas I can get even more specific with,” said Ramberg. However, it is not just Moore who has influenced Ramberg’s directing. During the process, Ramberg has leaned heavily into a collaborative style. Ramberg expressed their joy in this, stating, “I love when my team or my actors come in and offer their insight and perspectives; I love that everyone has something different to offer. The first week of my freshman year here I remember hearing ‘take space, make space,’ and I remember how much that resonated with me in the way that I wanted [to] carry myself as a leader.

That statement sticks with me today as I enter the rehearsal room; I find it’s just as important to hold space and make choices as it is to make space and listen to what everyone can bring to the table.”

Ramberg’s primary focus in directing “Fun Home” is showcasing the story. In discussing her inspiration for directing, Ramberg notes, “I’m a storyteller at heart; every time I’m looking for a show, I’m looking for stories that resonate, and this one resonated in so many different ways. Being a senior, I’ve been really into journey and discovery and reflection. I’m in a never-ending search for stories that I wish I could have heard at different points of my life. I’m also a designer, which really helps fuel my directorial inspiration; I love to see how all of these moving parts really come together, and so in some ways my design experience also inspires my directing.”

Ramberg has expressed how excited they are for audiences to not only see the show, but also to experience all of the distinct directorial choices they have made. Ramberg says, “I’ve made and continue to make some really interesting choices revolving around the world of the show; it takes place at three different points in time, and three actors play the same character throughout time, so I’m super excited for the audience to come in and react to these choices. There’s a lot that kind of just has to play out for the audience- so I’m particularly proud of and excited for audiences to see the ending sequence; we spent all of the beginning of the show building this world and watching it start to unravel has been such a crazy process to piece together, and I can’t wait to see how people react.”

In discussing how this has differed from other Studio shows they have been a part of, Ramberg stated, “I’ve worked on Studios as a designer on a few separate

projects, and while the production process feels very familiar, it is a different artistic experience. I feel like I’ve really gotten to create and execute my own complete vision, rather than focusing on specific aspects of somebody else’s vision. Of course, I’ve felt passionate about other things that I’ve worked on, but this one really takes the cake.”

Despite the overall positive experience, directing “Fun Home” has not been without its challenges. Ramberg outlined these, explaining, “The show has a lot of moving parts, so a challenge I’ve faced is getting those parts functioning clearly together. The alleyway [runway style] setup took some time for me to work my head around in relation to those moving parts, but in the end, it allowed for a really unique and visual timeline. I feel confident that my prep work and design experience have set me up really well for addressing those challenges and even offered me new insights.

This show carries great significance for Ramberg, as she highlighted in mentioning, “I don’t even think I could put into words how fulfilling this has been for me. To be able to actually focus on my craft and check all of my artistic boxes with what feels kind of like a dream show is extremely fulfilling. I have had a great experience being a part of this season. I’m super grateful to the MTA (Muhlenberg Theatre Association) for taking on this project and for trusting me, and I’m super grateful for my entire cast and team for joining me on this process. Every single time we work or rework any part of the show, I learn something new and to me, that feels so magical- to come together in a room full of theatre artists and to continuously explore and discover together is honestly just quite amazing.”

WMUH Presents

URSULA RUCKER

Hip Hop Poet

TIM MOTZER

Sonic Alchemist

Special Guest **THRRR**



Free with Berg ID
\$10 General Admission
Benefits M.U.L.E. Cabinet

7:30 PM | November 4, 2023
Red Door - Seegers Union
Muhlenberg College



Jay's Local

Now Serving:

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“..Jesus..” from process to production

By MEGAN HANSEN
CAMPUS VOICES EDITOR

On Oct. 26, the Muhlenberg Theatre Department opened their second production of the season, “...And Jesus Moonwalks the Mississippi.” Directed by guest artist Christopher Burris and choreographed by Samuel Antonio Reyes, the show used poetic prose as well as music and dance to tell the story of a Black man who was lynched, but was given a second chance at life as a woman named Demeter, played by Amira Jackson ‘24. She uses the time she has to search for her daughter, and learns of the scandals and hardships that her family has undergone along the way.

The audience was automatically transported into the world of the war-time South upon walking into the intimate studio theater, you were walking along the Mississippi River. “I thought it was visually stunning,” says Arden McHugh ‘25. The entirety of the black box was decorated by the story; ropes hanging from the ceiling, a mailbox on audience risers and a splintering house towering over the landscape. Designed by Assistant Professor of Scenic Design You-Shin Chen, the scenery immerses the audience into the history taking place on-stage before the story even begins. Audience member Hannah Scarlatoiu ‘26 appreciated the smallness of the space. “They really force the audience to physically be a part of the experience. The set design and use of space by the actors really pushed that concept. I couldn’t imagine the show being done any other way.”

When the lights went down, the audience was unsure of what to expect. “Both from my own personal perspective and from speaking with friends, I was nervous going into the show and seeing the large list of content warnings about how heavy and difficult to process the show was going to be,” says Shira Holtz ‘24.

Each character had their own internal conflict that connected to the overall story of the Verse family. The audience is taken through a world of war, violence, love and hate, grappling with identity, religion, power and ownership. There was a lot to be learned through this production about American history, Black struggles and how we as a college choose to use theater to represent the stories of different marginalized voices.

Rachelle Montilus ‘24, who played Miss Ssippi, an ethereal personification of the Mississippi River, shared her thoughts on what the show and her character meant to her in this context. “As a half-Black, half-Asian woman, playing identity on-stage has always been tough for me since I started acting,” she remarks. “With this show, I was given the opportunity to rediscover what playing race on-stage means to me, and how I can both be myself while also letting my experiences leak into a character. Playing race on-stage is difficult, and I often find myself asking the question of ‘whose skin am I wearing?,’ but finding the intersection between myself and Miss Ssippi allowed me to find a lot of joy in it! Over the course of the difficult weeks, I was able to fall in love with my character, which gave me a lot of the motivation to get through long days.”

The show seemed to be well-received by audience members, despite the initial intimidation of its content. Scarlatoiu stated, “Being a place that’s meant to educate the upcoming generation of art makers, it’s Muhlenberg Theatre & Dance’s job to show what theatre can be; it makes us think, reflect and experience. It’s their job to show us the importance of facing history and politics through theatre.”

There seems to be a common theme of identity exploration amongst the department shows this semester. The previous show, Caridad Svich’s “Labyrinth of Desire,” aimed to highlight queer expression and gender exploration. An emphasis has been placed by the department on bringing otherwise marginalized voices to the forefront of the stage.

“I hope that ‘...And Jesus Moonwalks the Mississippi,’ with a large student of color leaning cast, is able to give a taste of the talent in the black community here at Muhlenberg. At a PWI [predominantly white institution], uplifting Black voices doesn’t just mean telling Black Stories—that’s too easy— it also means allowing Black performers to tell stories that speak to them and their experiences.” Montilus continued.

It is important to question whether or not there is a line to be drawn when putting on productions that evoke students to explore not only identity but emotional trauma as well as the unfiltered hatred which

is embedded in our society. Although portrayed through fictional stories such as this, the play ultimately implores the real world to acknowledge that American history was built on the back of marginalized people, particularly enslaved Black people. Holtz comments, “I do think that we do a lot of shows that ask students of color to grapple with their identity and specifically ask them to portray that grappling on-stage. I can’t imagine that would be easy to have to do in rehearsals every day and in front of an audience. Particularly knowing that we are a PWI, and seeing cast lists over the years, it seems that we are asking the same students to take on this challenge, and that is something that I think the department should keep in mind when selecting their shows.” It is important that students are provided with the proper resources when stepping into roles as challenging as the ones seen on the stage this weekend but are encouraged and comfortable in utilizing those resources with a team of informed and equipped individuals.

Annamaria Fernandez ‘24, who played Free Girl, commented, “I think when I was a part of [the] season selection I was under the impression that there would be a larger integration and use of resources like [Assistant Professor of Psychology and Africana Studies] Dr. Preddie, the counseling center, Allie Fanelli who was our intimacy coordinator and things of that sort (which were [only] brought in after faculty and staff were made aware of the lack of resources).”

Fernandez added, “When you’re working on a departmental show, especially one like this with content that could potentially harm the audience or production crew (including actors), you go in with the expectations that all of those resources for support will be there from the beginning. And they just weren’t. Moral of the story: the department— emphasis on department, as theatre and dance should not function separately—The department seems to think hiring Black artists is the only work. But that’s just a small piece of it.”

When choosing shows of such strong magnitude, it is important to consider what Muhlenberg has to offer. This does not solely refer to counseling, intimacy coordinators, fight captains, etc.— but refers to having the

on the refugee experience, and how we can contribute aid to those in need.

Jack Riccobono ‘25 said, “I thought the concert was beautiful and inspiring and displayed the importance of advocating for groups that are unable to advocate for themselves.”

The concert contained an array of pieces meant to



PHOTO BY MARCO CALDERON.

Rachelle Montilus ‘24 as Miss Ssippi.

bodies needed to tell a story such as this, and being able to facilitate a community which is all inclusive for all bodies.

“There was a large assumption made that everyone in the room came from the same background of blackness,” according to Amira Jackson ‘24, who played Demeter. “There weren’t just African-Americans in the room. There were Afro-Latinos, Afro-Asians— and yet there was this assumption made that everyone was familiar with African-American culture and history, which wasn’t the case. [The space] did not leave room for these multiple Afro-identities to figure out how and where they fit into their character.” Jackson reiterates that “...And Jesus Moonwalks the Mississippi” required the building of a community that celebrates diverse identities and intersectionality that was not quite present in the rehearsal process.

“I think that the play talks about the power that we have in making decisions, and the choices that we have in life,” remarks Jackson. “I don’t think that we as actors or we as students or people had enough time to converse about the content of the show or the space to have these important conversations.”

This is not to say that this environment is impossible to achieve, but it is definitely a point that the department must strive for when selecting productions with content that explores identity.

“It was a beautiful play. The language and the script and the story being told is important for everyone to hear. It recognizes that the solving of racism does not just require black people

showcase different communities of people who have been displaced, and it can be seen that the refugee crisis is vast enough that the ten choral works were unable to fully represent the scale of displaced people across the world.

Esther Klinger ‘25, a singer in the College Choir said, “I believe that the refugee crisis is extremely important to cover

protesting in the streets, but racism is something that is affecting both parties. Although racism was a white creation, white people and black people have to work together to fix racism,” Jackson comments.

The college strives to acknowledge these histories and struggles, but many students believe that the department should handle processes with more care, in order to make sure the correct message and information is sent.

“I hope that this production opens the doors to new areas of growth in the campus community and Theatre department, allowing for more and safer spaces for Black artists to create on the main stage. This show was different from other shows in the past as the leading cast was comprised of mostly black actors. This provided a supportive environment and unity among the cast like I’ve never felt before,” Montilus remarks. “Many of the struggles we faced during this process, we faced together, and Robyn Watson (Director of Co-Curricular for the Theatre and Dance Department) was there for us every step of the way. Robyn and our choreographer Sammy took great care to make us feel seen and cared for in the rehearsal room and on-stage as actors, and off-stage as people and students. I learned a lot of lessons from doing ‘...And Jesus Moonwalks the Mississippi,’ the most outstanding being the importance of support systems in the arts. Support systems, allyship, collaboration and safety will never be something that I compromise on in creative spaces ever again.”

and I’m glad that the concert attempted to do that. However, especially in the songs that were sung by the College Choir, there was not a lot of variety among the cultures that were represented in each set. So, while I’m glad the concert chose to focus on the refugee crisis, I wish that a more diverse repertoire was chosen.”

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Train” is an arrangement meant to not only speak through its lyrics, but the way in which the arrangement is sung is reflective of the sounds a train makes— to the point where one could hear the wheels rolling.

The concert was dedicated to highlighting refugee experiences,

and how displacement comes in varying forms. On the program of the concert, there was a QR code for anyone who would like to donate to a community partner, the Refugee Community Center in Allentown. The proceeds of the weekend went to an emergency fund for refugees within the community. A moving and inspiring performance led people to become more informed

Consuming more than just candy

By JOHNNY VEGLIA
MANAGING EDITOR

Wig and other accessories not included with this costume

SPIRIT HALLOWEEN TRADITIONAL TRICK-OR-TREAT COSTUME

Halloween is a fun and spooky holiday! It’s actually one of my personal favorites, but it comes at a hefty price. The whole idea of Halloween is based around consumption, or at least it is framed that way in our current society and sociocultural context. The expectations are that people buy brand new costumes each year and then provide various sorts of candy, festive displays and other treats for people to enjoy.

It’s a lovely concept. I vividly remember in elementary school when my art teacher told our class that Halloween was her favorite holiday because it allowed for generosity to be showcased and embraced. I think this is a great point, especially because the whole idea of giving out candy allows for people to be kind and welcoming to strangers and so forth. However, the idea is grander than the execution.

ADDITIONAL ACCESSORY: CANDY

Candy is extremely overpriced and costumes are no different. People may not value one house’s generosity as much as another’s because they do not offer the same candy quality, variety, decor and more. The houses with the king sized candy bars are always seen in a more favorable light.

Candy also causes people to confuse generosity for actual



Photo credit to @spirithalloween on Instagram.

evilness. Would people really waste their own money and energy in putting drugs in candy for people to consume? While there are definitely some bad apples in the world, should we really be assuming that everyone is out to get us? It may be Halloween, but let’s be afraid of the creatures and fictional elements rather than what people may or may not put in our candy.

ADDITIONAL ACCESSORY: HAUNTED HOUSE

In order to have the perfect spook-tacular display in one’s home, they have to deck it all out in cobwebs, tombstones, potions, \$300 12-foot-tall skeletons and whatever else one may find creepy. Now I say this as my family and I decorate our house each year. In fact, I used to host a haunted house for eight years to raise money for the Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey. I absolutely loved this experience, but I also am privileged to have been able to facilitate that experience and obtain the means to decorate, provide costumes and have people volunteer to scare.

Now, our haunted house was never as crazy as the ones you may find on YouTube, but it still was fun and creative nonetheless. This extremism of decorating has even expanded upon the

screens of YouTube to television and streaming. “The Great Halloween Fright Fight,” an ABC show where families compete to see who has the most extravagant Halloween display, is another example of this extremism. I actually watched an episode this past weekend to get me in the Halloween spirit and it was insane. One kid, who was only 17 years old, had over 100 animatronics in his walk-through experience and display. This level of consumerism should not be the ideal of Halloween, but it makes for outlandish entertainment.

ADDITIONAL ACCESSORY: FUN

One should not have to do all of this in order to celebrate the holiday. It is also hard when most activities to celebrate the holiday revolve around spending money. Spirit Halloween is free to walk through and have fun with the various props, but it still is a store and is based around consumerism.

The same can be said for the other major stores and their displays for Halloween. The professional haunted houses and other scary experiences are also an upcharge, such as with Halloween Horror Nights at Universal Studios. The nice thing about

Dorney Park Halloween Haunt is that your ticket to the park also includes the mazes and other elements, which is more of an exception rather than the norm.

ACCESSORY: WHATEVER YOU HAVE

However, this level of consumerism and idea of celebrating the holiday in the right way also allows for creativity to blossom from unlikely areas. People are able to take a step back and find unique ways to celebrate the holiday. For example, costumes can be niche and obscure and allow for people to explore and create with the elements already in their closets. I personally love this and I have dressed up as two of Olivia Rodrigo’s songs for Halloween by now, which isn’t bad, it’s just a little weird.

My personal haunted house also allowed for creativity and a use of resources already available. I personally loved how we used Dollar Tree tablecloths to serve as walls between scenes. We also created a sinister and captivating sequence with the seven deadly sins thanks to Dollar Tree frames spray painted green for Envy, blankets for Sloth and clothes in my sisters’ closets to bring these powerful sins to life. Thank you to my mom, grandma and the rest of

my supportive family for all of their incredible hard work with the haunted house. This was a truly incredible experience and while it still operated within the ideas of consumerism, we made use of what we had and collected over the years to be practical, interesting and dynamic.

Also, there are still fun and affordable ways to celebrate the holiday and consume joy rather than more materialistic items. We don’t have to be swallowed in Greed, another one of the seven deadly sins. Whether it be a movie night with friends, baking the spooky ghost and pumpkin cookies, or listening to your favorite spooky songs, it’s all wonderful ways to enjoy the spooky season. You don’t need the latest Spirit Halloween animatronic, or the next Home Depot 12-foot creation, to celebrate, though they do look spooktacular. I also love a good after Halloween clearance sale, which may make me a little bit of a hypocrite, but at least it’s on sale!

DIY HALLOWEEN COSTUME

In the end, Halloween is just one day of the calendar year. There is not one right way to celebrate the spooktacular holiday, especially not when the bloody killer of consumerism lurks at every turn and corner.

Do the accessories not included with the costume really need to be purchased? What is the difference between generosity and consumerism? Will capitalism ever let us know the difference?

Seat stealing scaries!

By EMILY NALLY
STAFF WRITER

It is a beautiful autumn day at Muhlenberg. We are halfway through the semester, and I’m leisurely walking to class. It’s a normal Wednesday, nothing out of the ordinary. At least I thought. I approached my classroom, pulled open the door and headed to my seat, when complete horror struck my eyes. Nothing has ever sent shivers down my spine more than what I had found. This was something diabolical, vicious, hysterical, murderous almost! Someone was sitting in my seat. My seat! My seat which is assigned to me but not technically assigned but everyone knows it’s assigned because they sit in their assigned seat too. I mean, I’ve been sitting in this seat since the first day of class, it is my spot! Why in the world would someone do such a horrible thing to me?

While it may not seem like a big deal, a change in seating completely messes me up. Ac-

tually, it messes most people up. Humans are creatures of habit, and while some change is necessary, consistency is key. Staying consistent helps us to create an environment which is comfortable and trusting. Interestingly enough, several articles cite a study that states the reasons behind why myself and many others like to sit in the same seat every class. It is something called environmental psychology, which describes the connection between people and their environment, and how we can use that relationship to our advantage. What can we do to improve our relationship with our surroundings? These are all questions that environmental psychologists try to answer. The way we as humans interact with what is around us plays into our emotions and stress levels. So when something is unbalanced in our environment, it completely throws us off.

Looking further into environmental psychology, there is something called territoriality. When you sit in the same seat,



Credit to WOKANDAPIX on Pixebay.

not only are you interacting with your environment, but you are also creating a personal territory. You do this unconsciously for many reasons, but mostly this helps you control the environment around you, especially if you feel out of place, which then

helps you achieve goals with little interference. Studies have observed the behavior of college students and found that most will sit in the same seat every day, which acclimated them to the class, bettering their overall performance in the course. In

fact, picking their seat and sitting in it each day helped relieve the students in the study of any stress or anxiety that could come from the class. So when someone sits in your seat- in your “territory” so to say- it makes sense that it throws you off. You’ve grown accustomed to that spot and therefore have a sense of comfort when sitting in it.

So with all that being said, to those who have sat in someone else’s seat before, stop. Just sit in your real seat. Do not try to mix things up because you are potentially ruining someone’s entire mindset and performance in the class, and you’ll probably mess yours up too. Plus, please know if you steal someone’s seat they will be glaring at you for the entirety of class and will get there next time incredibly early to get their original seat back. Totally not speaking from experience. Now that it is the week of Halloween, though, if you want to completely and terribly horrify someone, sitting in their seat will definitely spook them.

No one opens the door for a native New Yorker. Here’s why you should be the one to do it...

BY MEGAN HANSEN
CAMPUS VOICES EDITOR

I try to awaken every morning with the mindset that there is a new sun on the horizon. A new hope to be had, as the prospects of each day await my eager arrival. Today, the birds were chirping harmoniously with the garbage truck outside of my small window, a wonderful addition to my serene view of the dumpster. My alarm only rang five times— a new record— and I knew it was going to be a great day.

I stepped outside, took a deep breath of that fresh, Allentown air, and headed off to Seegers full of my usual gusto. I walked through Parents Plaza, around to the front entrance of the building, so that I could take in the beauty of the Academic Row foliage and tired, yet persistent students on my way. But as I went to enter the building, my positive feelings and high hopes were dashed by an aggressive flash of red in my face. To my complete and utter dismay, the student in front of me had not held the door open. And thus, my day had been completely ruined.

Maybe I’m being a tad dramatic. If you couldn’t tell, I tend to embellish. However, it is true that I was put off by this event for reasons that were unbeknownst to me at the time. Before I came to this school, I never really thought twice about whether or not the person in front of me held the door. It was always such a trivial gesture that would earn a “thank you” or a slight nod of approval when done, but would never cross my

mind otherwise. But for some reason, I scoffed when I was met with a closed door this morning. Upon doing some reflecting, I’ve come to realize the importance of this perceived “bare minimum” action, and the way in which Muhlenberg embraces it as an unspoken policy.

It truly does make me feel like a part of a community in a surface-level way. Muhlenberg claims to, metaphorically speaking, encourage the opening of doors towards opportunities for its students and new connections with other Mules. For me, it is simply a matter of feeling valued by my fellow classmates. Each literal door-opener is a temporary friend, a new person to smile at down academic row, a face that has become slightly more familiar. I even use door-opening as an excuse to say hello to my friend crushes: people I know vaguely that I would like to learn more about on a personal level.

I’ve noticed that the general politeness of opening the door has translated to some of my other day-to-day practices as well. In terms of friendships, it has taught me that making the effort to go out of the way for someone does not go unnoticed, even if the gesture is not necessarily grand. I also find myself smiling at almost anyone I pass by, and having more confidence to compliment strangers. Selfishly, I feel rewarded by the influx of kindness I have been attempting to put out into the world lately, but I ultimately hope that it has a lasting effect on my classmates more so than anything else.

In my experience and through talking with other students, I

have learned that the balance between your social and personal life in a campus setting can be challenging. I am a social person through and through, but I have unfortunately fallen victim to the Muhlenberg epidemic of taking on more activities and work than I should—and I am more tired than I would like to admit. My mother likes to say to me, “I pay for you to have a nice, big room. Why don’t you use it?” Something I need to get better at is being alone, yet not feeling left out or detached from the people around me. This issue seems to be a common phenomenon amongst college-aged students. On mornings when I feel the need to sleep in and go for a run as opposed to getting coffee with my friends, I find that I can at least rely on the social interactions that take place through these bare-minimum actions—such as holding the door and complimenting strangers—to tether me to the surrounding community. When I am instead met with a gust of wind from a door swinging closed, I feel shut out.

Although easy to lose sight of, my experience with the Seegers door that morning invited me to take into consideration that, in times of hardship, things that seem as insignificant as holding the door for someone have the power to make or break the rest of the day—they hold more significance than we can see on the surface. I implore us all to continue practicing this policy of holding the door open for the person behind us, both at Muhlenberg and outside of it.



PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR MADDIE CILIENTO '25.



*Tiny horoscopes for a tiny campus
Weekly advice and predictions
communicated by Victor’s Lament*

Aquarius (January 20 – February 18)
This week you feel like a snake overdue to shed its skin. Unfortunately the closest you can get is to exfoliate—it can’t hurt!

Pisces (February 19 – March 20)
You know, if you feel called out by a song you don’t HAVE to listen to it over and over. Just a thought.

Aries (March 21 – April 19)
You’re in denial that fall has set in and winter is on the way. Make it easier on yourself and embrace the seasonal depression. On the bright side: hot chocolate!

Taurus (April 20 – May 20)
This week you’ll have a stress dream about learning how to do fractions in middle school. Don’t worry—either you’ve moved on to much more complicated equations now, or you’ll never have to do math without the Internet ever again.

Gemini (May 21 – June 20)
You’re a little overwhelmed this week. Lay on the floor for 20 minutes and then get back to work!

Cancer (June 21 – July 22)
Stay away from eggs this week, they’re always going to be too eggy.

Leo (July 23 – August 22)
Take out your frustrations via microwave popcorn. Imagine every “pop” is the sound of someone who annoyed you getting slapped.

Virgo (August 23 – September 22)
Get yourself a swear word coloring book; you can get that repressed anger out and make something beautiful at the same time!

Libra (September 23 – October 22)
You can’t change the past. What you can do, is gaslight yourself and everyone else into pretending it didn’t happen.

Scorpio (October 23 – November 21)
Don’t worry—Halloween may be over, but you can terrify people with your existential questions all year round!

Sagittarius (November 22 – December 21)
If you’re not already scared for your Spotify Wrapped you should be, and God help you if you’re on Apple music.

Capricorn (December 22 – January 19)
Maybe you should watch some baby sensory videos and calm down.



Cross country puts their best foot forward

By OLIVIA OBERMAN
SPORTS EDITOR

Muhlenberg’s men’s and women’s cross country teams attended the Centennial Conference Championships at McDaniel College on Saturday, Oct. 28. After persevering through challenging course conditions and rather surprising October heat, the men’s team placed seventh overall and the women’s team ninth.

Co-captain Caitlin Kinnear ‘24 elaborated on the race conditions. “This weekend’s race was a tough one because of the conditions. Being on a course that was a lot hillier than our team is used to and running in hotter weather than we usually do [required] us to have to trust our training and put in a lot of effort in the race. So, given the conditions and change from our typical races, the race went well as we all persevered through a pretty challenging course.”

“We showed up to the course the day before the meet. All of us were daunted by it. The elevation

on both the men’s and women’s courses was crazy. The turns were really tight on the course as well,” adds Isabelle Hoffman ‘26.

Regardless of the terrain, the Mules dug into their team culture and put their best foot forward— quite literally. Hoffman continues, “Knowing we are in one of the hardest conferences for cross country and competing on the hardest course is definitely a lot of pressure. However, we focused on placement rather than time knowing it would be difficult to get our personal best. We all supported each other during the race. It was a proud moment for everyone after we crossed the finish line knowing that we put in 100 percent.”

Amidst all of the pressures at that championship meet, there were several standout individual performances. Among those included Raam Ravishankar ‘27 who placed eighth overall for first-years, and Kinnear who finished first on Muhlenberg’s women’s side for the sixth time this season!

PHOTO BY ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY ‘27.



Women’s cross country team poses for the camera.

Volleyball serves up victory against Washington College

By MEREDITH RAAB
ROOKIE WRITER

In a thrilling showdown on their home court, the Muhlenberg volleyball team emerged victorious against Washington College with a decisive 3-1 win. The Mules displayed outstanding teamwork and remarkable serving, which made the home finale, and Senior Day, a memorable afternoon for both players and fans.

The team was well prepared for this game, which showed in the result.

“We placed a great deal of importance on the serve and pass as it is the foundation of a match,” said Captain Julia Ficon ‘24. “We have added a lot more combo plays to our offense and focused on getting comfortable using unconventional offensive schemes like a back-row attacker.”

Moving into this match, the Mules were serious about their strategy.

“We’ve been working a lot in practice refining our communication and eliminating mental mistakes,” said Isabella Pontrelli ‘24. “We’re also working on

switching up our serve receive plays to be less predictable on offense and increase first ball kills to shorten service runs on us.”

The precision and focus in practice transferred to the court and allowed for special performances come game time. Christina Marcin ‘26 hit a career-high of 25 kills, the most in one match by a Mule since 2004.

After splitting the first two sets, Muhlenberg grabbed a 10-0 lead in the third set behind the serving of Jenny Ryan ‘27. The Mules took a 2-1 set lead with a 25-15 win. Then, a 7-0 run with Ficon serving in the fourth set led Muhlenberg to finish the match with a 25-18 win.

As of Oct. 28, the Mules (13-9, 3-5) are tied for seventh place in the Centennial Conference standings. They still have to face the teams in fifth (Haverford) and sixth (Dickinson). The top six teams qualify for the playoffs, and with the Washington win under their belt, the Mules are still in the running for a play-off spot.

The team has shown tremendous growth and success throughout this season. They’ve

adapted to challenges and even saw excellent contributions from the younger players.

“We’ve done a good job adjusting to our relatively low number of healthy players this season,” says Pontrelli. “It’s been great having a bunch of first years who are excited to contribute in whatever way they can, and returners have been able to draw upon their experience to help us move forward in conference play.”

“I am very proud of the effort we have put forth this season; we have gone up against numerous regionally and nationally ranked teams and proven ourselves as competitors,” says Ficon. “While some of those games have been losses, the team has worked incredibly hard in matches and has worked to correct errors and problems that arise when playing tough competition.”

With each victory, the Mules continue to show their commitment to excellence, sportsmanship and teamwork. Stay tuned for more thrilling action as the Volleyball team takes on Dickinson on Nov. 4, at 1:00 p.m.

PHOTO BY ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY ‘27.



Christina Dalton ‘24 spikes a ball.

Check out what’s new at the GQ!

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Men’s soccer secures victory

BY PENELOPE SCHNEIDER
ROOKIE WRITER

The Muhlenberg men’s soccer team concluded their regular season with a resounding 1-0 win against McDaniel, capping off the campaign on a high note. Luke Feeney ‘24, one of the team’s senior leaders, says, “We have a very positive and confident outlook going into playoffs and have been getting the results we need. We know we can continue to be better and hopefully playoffs will allow us to show that.” This victory, along with Dickinson’s 4-2 win against Johns Hopkins, has secured the Mules the coveted third seed for the upcoming Centennial Conference playoffs.

In a closely-contested match, the Muhlenberg men’s soccer team achieved the decisive goal in the 28th minute, following a free-kick opportunity. Chris Richards ‘23 initiated the play by drawing a foul in the Green Terror’s defensive territory. The en-

suing free kick was expertly executed by Evan Schlotterbeck ‘25, forcing the McDaniel goalkeeper to make a leaping save. Despite the goalkeeper’s efforts, Feeney capitalized on the rebound, registering his third goal of the season and clinching the match.

Notably, the Mules displayed their dominance in the match statistics, boasting a commanding 15-2 advantage in shots. Their tenacious defense allowed only one shot on goal, which came from a substantial distance late in the second half, resulting in the team’s ninth shutout of the season. With an impressive 11-3-2 overall record and a solid 5-2-2 standing in conference play, the Mules have demonstrated their competitive spirit throughout the season and are now poised for a strong postseason run. As Feeney emphasized, “The goal for the team is to win the Centennial Conference again. We have recent experience from last year’s playoffs, so we know what it takes to accomplish it.”

Team culture and dedication

have also seen improvement in recent weeks, with Feeney noting, “The team culture has improved a lot within the last week. Practices have been very competitive, and all players are motivated. Hopefully, the competitiveness of practices will transfer into our games and we can have a long run in the playoffs.”

With their focus firmly set on the Centennial Conference playoffs, the Muhlenberg men’s soccer team is gearing up to host Dickinson in the first round. This sets the stage for an exciting and fiercely competitive match, the details of which will be announced as the date approaches. The Mules currently celebrate their regular-season success and eagerly anticipate the opportunity to make their mark on Centennial Conference soccer.

PHOTO BY ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY ‘27.



FROM **PROFESSOR** PAGE 1

alumni are mainly referring to the section in her answers to The Weekly’s questions which she released on her own account, in addition to several other social media posts. One of the pieces of evidence that the petition writers cite includes, “So when Palestinians respond—both violently and peacefully—these are not unprovoked attacks. Any form of resistance is evacuated of historical context and framed by Israel and the US as terrorist attacks.” As of Oct. 31 the petition has roughly 4,500 signatures.

Jake Gordon explained his support for the removal of Finkelstein, stating that her actions and rhetoric pertaining to the ongoing war in Gaza amounts to the glorification of terrorism, followed immediately by victim blaming. “Dr. Finkelstein crossed a line when she glorified terrorism by defending the violent actions of Hamas and subsequently blamed the victims of the attacks for the horrors they endured.” This is not the first time that Gordon has spoken out against pro-Palestine speakers. In 2018, in response to a talk given by Palestinian speaker Sa’ed Atshan, Ph.D., that Finkelstein brought to campus, Gordon published a critical op-ed in The Weekly. In the article Gordon states, “the [talk’s] narrative transitioned from historical and informational to a highly politically-charged, nationalist and one-sided presentation of the humanitarian struggle that ‘all’ of the Palestinian people face living in the occupied territory, and an examination of the atrocities that are allegedly being committed by the State of Israel.”

Shira Gordon discussed the importance of Finkelstein’s position as an educator with regards to this controversy. “It’s [her] responsibility as a professor to be honest and truthful and to create a comfortable and welcoming environment.” She stated that biased reporting and inflammatory speech pitted people against each other, contrary to what she considers to be the “responsibility as a professor... to make everyone feel equal.”

The issue of narrative versus fact became a clear point of contention for supporters of the petition. “Liberal arts means different perspectives,” said Halpern, “Dr. Finkelstein is putting out incorrect and biased information like it’s the only truth.”

Provost Laura Furge, Ph.D., expanded on the concept of fact versus narrative noting that “There are no simple solutions to any of these complex questions. And we have been striving for a diverse community here at Muhlenberg, which we have, and part of having a diverse community means having differences in opinion, based on our lived experiences, our perspectives, the the truths that we hold from the backgrounds that we hail from and how we live and work together.”

Some students contributed to the conversation, questioning the degree to which a difference in opinion may constitute a legitimate academic position. “It is the responsibility of Dr. Finkelstein as a professor at our school to have the capacity to acknowledge the difference between narrative and fact,” stated a current Political Science student who wished to remain

anonymous. “To present a narrative as fact, as she has done repeatedly by claiming supporters of the Palestinian cause are under attack by ‘fascists’ or by stating that Israel has no right to defend itself but Palestinians have the right to utilize violence to further their political ambitions, is entirely counterproductive and sows further hatred between two already marginalized groups.”

Not all alumni are in favor of removing Finkelstein from her position. On the contrary, some are actively working to allow Finkelstein to hold onto her job, with a virtual letter being distributed available for those to sign who stand in solidarity with Finkelstein. One of these individuals is Annaliese Collins ‘23 who expressed their view on the matter saying, “Just seeing that many signatures when I know full well that zero of them have actually had a class with her or have even had the pleasure of meeting her. I think knowing that the alumni who sign the petition would want to prevent other students from having Dr. Finkelstein as a teacher is also what frustrates me. Her classes are impactful and changed the way I viewed learning and Academia for the better. She is a really important figure on campus for a lot of students with marginalized identities, especially students in the Queer community.”

Collins continued noting, “This is 100 percent about academic freedom but beyond that, it’s about Palestine. Our higher education institutions couldn’t even use the word Palestine when making a statement, and it goes beyond that. Just look at the statements

made by teams in the NFL, Palestine is always omitted. And that’s on purpose; by removing the word we are able to ignore the genocide of the Palestinian people at the hands of Israel. We remain complicit through ignorance. Dr. Finkelstein is fighting this intentional ignorance and people aren’t happy. Removing Dr. Finkelstein on the grounds of this petition would be a huge injustice.”

The removal of Finkelstein from the College may not be as simple as many imagine. Finkelstein was awarded tenure by the College in 2021. Gaining tenure ensures that professors not only will have job security but also academic freedom to discuss and research topics at their discretion. When concerns regarding a tenured professor’s legitimacy arise, Furge notes that the College brings in a third-party entity, typically in the form of counsel, to investigate these claims. Furge would not, however, directly comment on the status of Finkelstein’s case.

Finkelstein remarked on her tenured status, saying, “Regardless of whether I’m tenured or not, I think that... my understanding from the administration is that I have academic freedom and I’m being protected. Do I know that for sure? You know, I don’t know what’s happening behind the scenes and I am hesitant to speculate over whether or not I’m going to be protected or not.”

The College’s faculty handbook outlines the reasons that a tenured faculty member would be fired or suspended. These reasons include the failure for faculty members to fulfill their academic

obligations, a disregard for the policies of the College or scholarly communities, a criminal conviction or an incapacity to conduct work. The handbook notes, however, that “Suspension, termination, or threat thereof, may not be used to restrain or interfere with faculty members, visiting faculty members, or adjunct faculty members in their exercise of academic freedom or rights of citizenship.” But whether or not the college allows the public to determine what qualifies as acceptable speech remains to be seen.

Finkelstein expressed what drives her to speak about this issue saying, “I like to hope that it is sort of my responsibility as a Jewish person who is not a Zionist, and who, is in solidarity with oppressed people everywhere, that this is what I have to do, and I hope that I don’t get sanctioned over it.”

Additional reporting by Max Makovsky ‘24



By DYLAN ROSENBLATT
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

On Saturday, Oct. 28, the Johns Hopkins Blue Jays traveled up from Baltimore to take on the Mules, in a matchup that likely determined who will be crowned the Centennial Conference (CC) football champion. Coming into the game, both teams held records of 7-0 and were ranked in the top 20 of the American Football Coaches Association Division III (DIII) poll. The matchup between Muhlenberg and Johns Hopkins has been a key one in recent years, as one of the two schools has been the Centennial Conference champion in three of the past four seasons. This proved evident, as the game’s attendance was the largest it has been for a Muhlenberg football home game since they last hosted Johns Hopkins in 2021.

After an intense 59 minutes and 57 seconds of football, the game was tied 28-28, and Johns Hopkins was loading up to kick a 31-yard field goal to win the game as the clock expired. In one of the most bizarre endings to a football game, the Johns Hop-

kins kicker accidentally kicked the ball into one of his blockers, the blocker was then able to pick up the ball and run it into the endzone to score a touchdown and win the game 34-28. As this was one of most odd finishes to a football game, the final play garnered coverage from sports media platforms such as ESPN, Sports Illustrated and Overtime.

There’s no denying that it was a heart-breaking loss, and unless Johns Hopkins loses their final two conference games and the Mules win their final two games, the Blue Jays will be crowned Centennial Conference champions. However, the team knows they must put this game behind them if they want to give themselves any chance at winning the Centennial Conference championship and also making the DIII National Playoffs.

“The message was sent immediately after the game. For Muhlenberg, the focus is always on ourselves. The only thing we can control is what we do mov-

ing forward. We need to have a great lift on Monday, a great practice on Tuesday and focus on improvement. Championship climb is a core value of ours and when times get tough is when we focus inward to get the best out of ourselves and our team,” said Head Coach Nathan Milne.

Chris Ardito ‘24 echoed his coach’s sentiment, saying, “This loss definitely hurts, but the fact that we still have a chance at an NCAA playoff bid will keep us moving in the right direction. We know we can compete at that level and that’s what will keep us focused on moving forward rather than dwelling on our loss. It’s hard to get over a loss like that, but we understand we need to have a “next game” at-

titude. There’s nothing we can do about that game now, and we have two more opportunities to show what we can do. We won’t let those go to waste.”

Even though this is the team’s first loss since Nov. 5, 2022, the Mules still have plenty of positives to take away from the matchup. “I thought the offense did a lot of great things this week-end. We were able to get the ground game going at times and Joe [Repetti ‘25] was picking apart their defense through the air late in the game when we needed to score fast. In the drives that failed to get going or stalled out, it was because of mistakes made by us rather than what they were doing defensively. If we can clean up the penalties and be a little more consistent in the red zone then this offense can compete with anyone in the country,” stated Ardito.

The team knows they must forget about Saturday’s loss and focus on their next opponent, Franklin & Marshall (F&M).



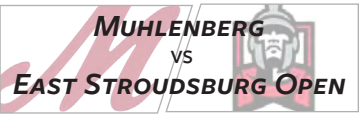

While Franklin & Marshall may not be a nationally-ranked team, they are not a team that the Mules can take lightly, as they only lost to Johns Hopkins by seven points earlier this season.

Ardito commented, “F&M is definitely a good team that has competed on a high level this season. This loss will motivate us to be great next week and prove to those who don’t think we belong in the playoffs that we do. We feel we still have a lot to prove and that starts this week-end against F&M.”

Milne relayed a similar message to Ardito’s saying, “This is a huge week for our team. This game versus F&M is to lock up second place in the CC. Not only that, but it is senior week and another opportunity for our program to reach eight wins and give ourselves a chance at the playoffs. The stakes couldn’t be any higher.”

Their matchup against the Franklin & Marshall Diplomats will kick off at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 4. The seniors of the team will be honored as it is the final home regular season game of their careers.

Coming up this week in
SPORTS
Nov. 2 - Nov. 8

Football	Volleyball	Wrestline	Women’s Basketball
 Sat, Nov. 4 @ 1:00 p.m. Scotty Wood Stadium	 Sat, Nov. 4 @ 1:00 p.m. Carlisle, Pa.	 Sun, Nov. 5 @ 10:00 a.m. East Stroudsburg, Pa.	 Wed, Nov. 8 @ 7:30 p.m. Memorial Hall

Ciarla publication paused

Muhlenberg's yearbook to not publish 2024 edition.

By KATHERINE CONLON
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

On Nov. 7, the Student Government Association (SGA) announced that the Ciarla would halt publication, at least temporarily. The yearbook has been a facet of the College for

went to press only through the hard work of very small student teams and with significant staff support, making it increasingly challenging to produce a comprehensive and engaging, student-managed publication."

The SGA also stated that there was a decrease in demand for the publication. They expressed in their statement that "In recent years, we have also observed a decline in the demand for traditional yearbooks. With the rapid rise of digital media and alternative ways to capture and share memories, the demand for print yearbooks has diminished,

continue the publication without sufficient demand."

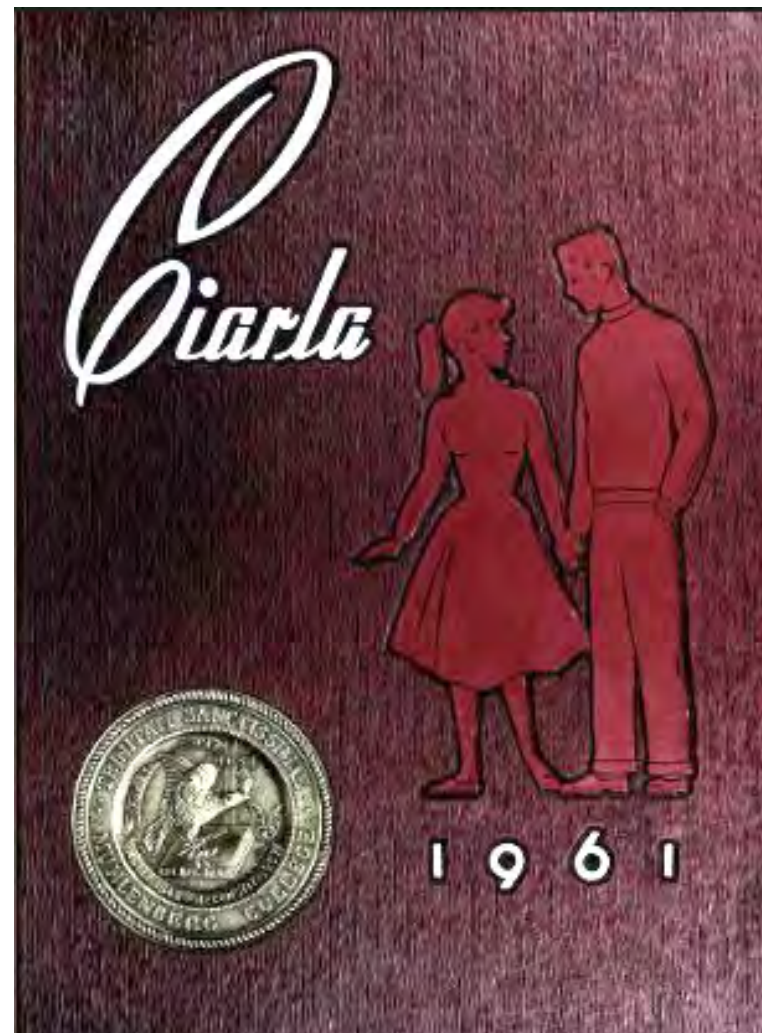
SGA President Jake Forstein '24 gave some context regarding the SGA's role in this decision. "The yearbook used to be one of SGA's permanent organizations, which basically means that they got a budget at the beginning of the year off the top...[In spring of 2022] the General Assembly voted to not make the yearbook a continued permanent organization for a few reasons. One being they were only doing one big request every year, and generally our permanent organizations have multiple, big requests throughout the year, to a point where it's overwhelming for our finance committee to have to deal with," said Forstein.

Forstein continued, noting, "[The Ciarla] was a resource that was only benefiting seniors. People were paying the student activities fee for four years under the understanding that they would eventually get a yearbook their senior year. But it also wasn't free to seniors, so they weren't getting a free yearbook, they were getting a yearbook that they had to pay for anyway."

Former editor-in-chief of the Ciarla, Julian Torres '25 commented on the Ciarla staff's knowledge of the yearbook's possible cancellation. He stated, "If I'm being entirely honest here, I knew about the decision to stop making yearbooks since last semester. In one of my meetings with [Director of News & Media Relations] Kristine Todaro, the supervisor for the yearbook, she told me that there was a high probability of discontinuing the yearbook due to the fact that there just really wasn't much support or student volition to do so."

Forstein added more insight regarding Todaro's involvement, saying, "At the end of last semester, the current treasurer, Evan Lipman '24, met with [Todaro], who essentially said 'there's so few people left in this organization, no one really wants to keep this thing going, I think that we should end it.'"

Torres added to the point regarding low levels of interest saying, "last year we sent out



The 1961 version of the Ciarla.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF TREXLER LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

emails to the entire school about interest meetings and only two kids would show up per meeting. We later got help from some Media & Comm interns, and we ended up with a team of like five students."

Shobha Pai '24 worked on the Ciarla's production staff. Pai expressed her thoughts on the matter, saying, "I understand SGA's decision...it was extremely exhausting because it was pretty much just me and [Todaro] working on it. We did not get a lot of student support because a lot of people on this campus see it as a waste of time. I am still grateful I worked on it because it made me a part of Muhlenberg history. [Todaro] is a great boss and really helped me carry the load."

The lack of a yearbook does not, however, mean that seniors will have to forgo their senior portraits. This service will still be offered on campus at no cost to the graduating class of 2024.

According to the SGA, the

funds that would have been allocated to the Ciarla will now be used "to continue to bolster those student involvement opportunities that current students are most excited about."

Torres summarized the evolving role of yearbooks, saying, "the point being made is that in this age of social media, there are so many other ways to keep track of your college memories and the things you want to hold on to. Do students really still need or use their yearbooks anymore? I mean you can easily take photos of things you want to capture on your phone. Your Instagram page essentially functions as a scrapbook. I enjoy yearbooks, but I do get the argument of them no longer being that important."



PHOTO COURTESY OF TREXLER LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

130 years, with the first edition coming out in 1893. It may seem unprecedented for Muhlenberg to stop a tradition that has been in place for over a century. However, the SGA did outline its reasons for making this decision.

In their emailed statement, they noted that a lack of student involvement in the Ciarla yearbook club was one factor that led to this change saying, "Recent editions of the Ciarla

making it challenging to justify the continued investment."

Finally, the last listed factor was an increase in cost to produce the book. They noted that "The cost of producing a high-quality yearbook has risen significantly, including expenses related to photography, design, printing and distribution. Unfortunately, this has strained resources and makes it financially unsustainable to

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The department "Sing[s] Happy!"
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Here's what you missed on
"Glee."
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Sports

Men's soccer ends with a
bang.
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Serving the Muhlenberg College Community since 1883

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The Muhlenberg Weekly strives for accuracy in reporting and writing, but we acknowledge that mistakes happen. Readers are invited to submit corrections about errors in articles, and they should be submitted to weeklyeditor@gmail.com. Corrections are also brought to our staff's attention by our own editors and writers. Our staff will review the suggested correction, consult with the author of the article, and issue the appropriate correction. Online corrections are located at the bottom of the article. Print corrections are located within the paper, on the page indicated in the online edition. However, The Weekly does not grant take-down requests for articles.

ADVERTISING POLICY

We request that advertising material be submitted by the Monday preceding publication at 5 p.m. If materials have not been received at that time, the advertisement will not run and the advertiser is still responsible for 100% payment. We reserve the right to decline any advertisement that is misleading, inaccurate, fraudulent, or deemed generally unacceptable. This determination will be made by the Business Staff in consultation with the Editor-in-Chief. The Muhlenberg Weekly maintains a distinction between its news & editorial content and advertising. As such, advertisements will not be accepted if they imitate the general style of The Weekly, intentionally or unintentionally. Examples of this include, but are not limited to: headlines, bylines, fonts, and column-arrangements. In order to make this distinction, The Weekly also reserves the right to include the word "advertisement" on any advertisement that is deemed too native.

CAMPUS SAFETY NOTES

10/24/23

Traffic—Report of vehicle driving at a high speed on Chew street, individual later identified and spoken to, student referred to Dean's office.

Animal Complaint—Report of racoon on campus, Allentown PD responded, Animal Control responded, no further incident.

Theft—Report of unknown individuals tampering with license plates on 26th and Chew Streets, Allentown PD responded, individuals spoken to, no suspects at this time.

10/26/23

Safety Hazard—Report of smell of gas on Chew Street, Plant Operations also responded and repaired problem.

Noise complaint—Report of noise complaint on N 22nd Street, individuals identified and spoken to and turned down music.

10/27/23

Unauthorized person—Report of unauthorized person in Seegers Union, individual identified and spoken to and left the area.

Traffic—Report of hit and run at Brown Hall causing minor damage to the paint, investigation to continue.

10/28/23

Injured student—Report of injured student in Seegers Union, MC EMS responded, Allentown EMS responded and transported student to hospital.

10/29/23

Noise complaint—Report of noise complaint on Gordon and 22nd, upon arrival several individuals were in the area but no noise could be heard, no further incident.

Alcohol violation—Report of alcohol violation in the Village, MC EMS responded, Allentown EMS responded and transported individual to hospital.

Social Butterflies club spreads its wings

Social Butterflies joins forces with a nonprofit for children with special needs to spread some Halloween cheer.

By ALEXANDRA DOWNEY
STAFF WRITER

A major part of Muhlenberg's mission is connection with the local community, which often comes in the form of volunteer work. Social Butterflies, a club founded by Gabi Klausner '24, aims to bridge the gap between Muhlenberg students and children with special needs.

On Oct. 29, members of Social Butterflies went to Camelot for Children, a local nonprofit organization that provides social and educational experiences for children with disabilities and chronic or terminal illnesses. Located in Allentown, Camelot for Children organized their annual Trunk or Treat event for kids with special needs, providing a fun and stress-free environment for Halloween celebrations. Muhlenberg

volunteers set up several stations with activities and treats, including a dinosaur-themed station with Inclusive Dino stickers designed specifically for this event. Klausner stated that the stickers "include dinosaur characters and other animals using assistive devices and medical equipment," as a part of Social Butterflies' overall mission to "promote representation and inclusivity which brought joy to Camelot's children and families." The club regularly volunteers with Camelot for Children, and this event showcases their dedication in promoting an inclusive environment for kids who may otherwise struggle with accessibility during Halloween.

Volunteer Erin DeSandro '26 loves the impact Social Butterflies has on the Camelot community: "The inclusive dinosaur stickers that we were handing out were a huge hit and the kids got so happy when they were picking through them. Being able to bring light into the lives of these children for just one day made me so happy and [is] a huge reason why I love going to Camelot with Social Butterflies." Social Butterflies' commitment to community change is reflected in their frequent visits to Camelot for Children, and its members share those values of dedication. DeSandro's

involvement personally stems from previous work with special needs children and a desire to make an impact. "I was inspired to join Social Butterflies because I knew that I wanted to do some sort of service that would allow me to make a difference in the lives of children and Social Butterflies seemed like the perfect fit." Social Butterflies' dedication to linking student life with community service not only embraces Muhlenberg's values, but also creates a fulfilling space for students to give back to the community that serves them in a meaningful way.

Klausner founded the club during COVID-19 to create community during an isolating time and to create Social Emotional Learning (SEL) lessons for children with special needs. The club has expanded their work to enact the promises of their mission. "Now in our fourth year, we have expanded our bi-weekly visits from our original school partners at Roosevelt Elementary School to include Camelot for Children, a nonprofit organization providing year-round social and educational opportunities to children with disabilities and chronic or terminal illnesses in a supportive, developmentally appropriate, enriching environment in order to make the magic of childhood accessible



PHOTO COURTESY OF GABI KLAUSNER '24.

Social Butterflies club members.

to children with unique needs."

Klausner stated that future plans for the club include "[continuing] to foster our partnerships with Camelot for Children, along with our original Allentown Schools site, Roosevelt Elementary School, for biweekly engagements. We continue to develop new ways to creatively engage all students respectfully via accessible, inclusive and supportive activities and special sessions." Social Butterflies' volunteer work not only helps in connecting children with young adults, but Muhlenberg students with the city of Allentown. Fostering connections within the local community is vital in sustaining a network between the campus

and the local area, especially in the realm of volunteer work. On behalf of the club, Klausner extends her thanks to Beth Halpern, Eveily Freeman and Christiana Campbell for their encouragement and support, as well as the Board of Associates for their generous funding for the Dino-themed station.

To get involved in or learn more about Social Butterflies, contact gklausner@muhlenberg.edu or socialbutterfliesmuhlenberg@gmail.com.

Muhlenberg weighs in on speaker race turned marathon

Election Edition



By MOLLY LEVINE
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

After almost three weeks without a speaker of the House, the third in line to the presidency, Republicans in the House of Representatives elected Mike Johnson (LA-04). However, this process garnered criticism from Republicans and Democrats alike as the caucus failed to elect several previous candidates since Kevin McCarthy’s (CA-20) removal from the speaker position on Oct. 3.

Maya Brooks ‘24 simply stated, “It’s all the worst people running for the worst job in America.”

McCarthy had previously made history with his 15th ballot battle to be speaker in Jan. 2023. Congressman Matt Gaetz, a member of the Freedom Caucus, filed for a motion to vacate following McCarthy’s working with democrats on a bipartisan continuing resolution to extend funding for the government until Nov. 17.

“The nearly three weeks without a speaker highlighted the major divides within the Republican Caucus in the House. Starting with the ouster of Kevin McCarthy that was enabled by rule changes orchestrated by a relatively small number of GOP representatives, through failed bids by members representing varied cohorts [within] the Republican Caucus, the divides within the party were highlighted,” said Chris Borick, Ph.D., professor of political science and director of the Institute of Public Opinion.



The United States Capitol building.

IMAGE BY MOTIONSTUDIOS FROM PIXABAY

It then seemed that House Majority Leader Steve Scalise would be the new speaker, but failed to win enough votes, as the slim Republican majority needed only four “no” votes to fail to elect a speaker.

The next candidate was Jim Jordan, widely known as one of Former President Donald Trump’s biggest supporters, who did not believe the 2020 presidential election results. In the past, Jordan has garnered criticism from the left and right alike for his involvement in the 2013 government shutdown. He additionally faced serious allegations of complicity in a sexual abuse scandal when he worked as an assistant coach on Ohio State’s wrestling team.

CNN reported around 12:45 p.m. on Oct. 24 that Tom Emmer of Minnesota was selected as the next speaker nominee by the House Republicans. By 4:30 p.m. the same day, Emmer had

dropped out of the race after failing to persuade any votes against him to change. This occurred after Trump came out against Emmer on Truth Social, a social media platform founded by Trump in 2021, saying, “I have many wonderful friends wanting to be speaker of the House, and some are truly great Warriors. RINO [Republican in Name Only] Tom Emmer, who I do not know well, is not one of them.”

Congress is facing the rapidly approaching Nov. 17 deadline to fund the government and debating whether to provide funding for international conflicts in Ukraine and Israel. This lapse in leadership may have more effects on the lives and interests of Muhlenberg students and faculty, as it is considered to be a politically active and aware campus.

Max Makovsky ‘24 said, “What affects Muhlenberg students most directly isn’t the

foreign policy itself, but rather the international or domestic events which dictate foreign policy. Case and point is the outbreak of war in Israel and the impact it has had on both the student population, and US foreign policy interests. A dysfunctional government could embolden enemies which could lead to events detrimental to both American foreign policy interests and the wellbeing of the student population.”

The long speaker’s race finally ended when Michael Johnson of Louisiana was elected as the speaker of the House on Oct. 25.

“The eventual election of Michael Johnson seemed more the product of exhaustion rather than excitement. The public’s confidence in government, already at very low levels, was only further eroded by the dysfunction playing out in the selection of a speaker,” said Borick.

However, now Johnson has the task of continuing the work of speaker of the House, still with the ability for one member of the Republican Caucus to call for a motion to vacate. Johnson will have to collaborate on federal spending as well as likely bills coming to the floor for funding for both Israel and Ukraine, as well as humanitarian concerns in Gaza.

When asked about the relevancy of the events in the House, Makovsky reflected, “Students were speaking about the potential government shutdown and the removal of Kevin McCarthy from his position as Speaker maybe three to four weeks ago, but recent events have widely taken over daily political discourse as the GOP has descended into chaos.”

Whether this continues to be an issue in the background will remain to be seen as the possibility of a government shutdown looms nearer, and both wars in Ukraine and in Israel and Gaza attract much attention and concern from Muhlenberg students.

Borick turned to the future, considering the 2024 election, “What’s interesting to consider is will the ultimate choice of Johnson, a member who opposed the certification of the 2020 election and maintains positions on reproductive rights that don’t align with many Americans become an anchor on the Republican efforts to keep control of the House in [2024].”

Muhlenberg and the Menendez scandal

By GEOFFREY LEVY
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

In 2015, the senior senator of New Jersey, Robert “Bob” Menendez, was indicted over corruption charges involving conspiracy, bribery and honest services fraud. It was alleged that he failed to disclose receiving vacations, campaign contributions and legal donations worth hundreds of thousands of dollars from his longtime friend Salomon Melgen, M.D., in exchange for personal and business-related favors. Amid these allegations, Senator Menendez stepped down from his role on the Foreign Relations Committee. In 2017, Menendez and Melgen stood trial, and both were ultimately acquitted. These charges were subsequently dismissed at the start of 2018 after it was decided the case would not be retried, and later that year, Bob Menendez would go on to win his bid for reelection.

Now, in 2023, for the second time in less than ten years, Menendez, along with his wife, have been federally indicted over corruption charges for fraud,

bribery and extortion, while serving in the U.S. Senate. Again, it is alleged that Menendez received hundreds of thousands of dollars in bribes, this time from Wael Hana, Jose Uribe and Fred Daibes, to curry favor for them personally as well as for the Egyptian government to which they have ties. The Menendez residence was searched, and it has been detailed that cash, gold and a luxury vehicle were found. Additionally, it is alleged that Menendez has received payment for what is described as a “low-or-no-show job” and mortgage payments on his home. Menendez has once again stepped down from the Foreign Relations Committee, which is especially relevant this time due to the three New Jersey associate/businessmen co-defendants’ ties to a foreign government.

Menendez has maintained that these allegations are false, stating, “...[The prosecutors] have misrepresented the normal work of a congressional office...” Menendez has gone further to refute the allegations, claiming that he was withdrawing

thousands of dollars from his personal savings because of “the history of [his] family facing confiscation in Cuba,” which was a concern under Communist rule. Interestingly, however, records indicate the Menendez family immigrated to the United States in 1953, six years before Castro’s Communist government took control in 1959. Additionally, Menendez has yet to provide any documentation proving that the amount of cash and gold found in his home aligns with the withdrawals he made from his savings. However, in support of Menendez’s claim of innocence, it is still possible he could be sitting on exculpatory evidence until he makes an appearance in court, which is set for May 6, 2024, as Menendez finished his statement by remarking, “I look forward to addressing other issues at trial.”

Many students at Muhlenberg come from New Jersey and are represented by Menendez. Student Sasha Dzhaniybekova ‘27 of Flemington, N.J. shared her thoughts on the allegations levied against Menendez, stating, “It’s incredibly unfortunate to learn

PHOTO FROM @SENATORMENENDEZ ON INSTAGRAM.



New Jersey Senator Bob Menendez.

that someone who is supposed to be a dependable politician accepts bribes. He got caught, too, which is so embarrassing for him.”

But it’s not only New Jersey residents expressing disapproval. However, some students are not aware of Menendez’s actions and immoral duties. Sarah Wedeking ‘24, another New Jersey resident, mentioned, “I didn’t know about the senator and it shows how I really need to be educated more on New Jersey politics.” There has been nonpartisan criticism of Menendez’s actions. Some

members from Menendez’s own party, including Pennsylvania Democratic Senator John Fetterman and Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (CA-11), have called for Menendez’s resignation. But, at the same time, other prominent politicians, such as Senator Chuck Schumer, have declined to join these demands. Thus far, Menendez has rejected these resignation requests and is still expected to run for reelection in 2024, the primary for which is under a month after his current trial date.

Dracula and zombies and healthcare, oh my!

Lehigh University’s Lorenzo Servitje, Ph.D., M.P.H., connects medicine and healthcare to humanity studies.

By MATTHEW BARESH
NEWS EDITOR

The College welcomed Lorenzo Servitje, Ph.D., M.P.H., to campus to share his recent discoveries in a lecture titled “Dracula, Zombies, and Contemporary Healthcare.” Servitje is currently the director of the Health, Medicine and Society Program and an associate professor of English at Lehigh University. He is the recent author of the book “Medicine is War: The Martial Metaphor in Victorian Literature and Culture” and is the co-editor of three scientific collections. His work ranges from medical militarization in the Victorian period to contemporary medical discourse and representation in the media today. Servitje’s talk was the 39th lecture of the Wallenberg Tribute lecture series, an annual tradition of a public lecture followed by a reserved dinner to honor Raoul Wallenberg and his sacrifices made during World War II.

Servitje began with an explanation for his enticing title choice. “[In the lecture] I’m going to give you a quick case study of what Dracula might tell us about antimicrobial resistance and we’re going to do a quick overview on the evolution of zombies and health sciences and public health. I would like you to think about the

infrastructure of healthcare in a very literal sense, but then we’ll also more broadly take a step back from a humanistic, maybe social scientific perspective to think about culture as part of the healthcare industry.”

He broke down the lecture into three digestible sections for the audience. The first section was titled “Foundations,” and included general terms in the healthcare and humanities literature and how the two fields overlap. The second section was titled “Infrastructure of Healthcare,” which explored the integrity of healthcare systems in the United States and the role of culture in this infrastructure. Lastly, Servitje was to discuss “The Time of Monsters: Then and Now,” which connected back to his research topic.

“Health humanities is an interdisciplinary field with the relationship between health and human experience, condition and its cultures,” Servitje explains. He expands on this with the idea that scientific knowledge and the practice of medicine are undoubtedly affected by the human experience and individuality of one another. History also plays an important role in the development of the healthcare industry as a whole. He gave the example of past epidemics giving rise to vaccines due to the human experience of infection and loss during those eras. Servitje then tied the human experience to culture and its role in structuring general healthcare.

“When infrastructure works really well, we don’t think about it until it breaks,” Servitje explains. “For example, if you have good internet connectivity, you don’t need to think about how you got here without any interruption. This is important to help us interrogate the underlying realities of healthcare. I’d now like to invite you to think about how cultural productions are

part of the infrastructure that makes up what we think of healthcare as. People’s values are based on ideas about the world and these ideas shape how people think and act. Cultural norms, including media, films, arts etc., and different ways of thinking help shape the changing practices and information of health and medicine amongst the public.”

Servitje concludes this second section of his lecture with a quote from Donna Haraway’s novel “Staying with the Trouble.” “It matters what stories make worlds, and what worlds make stories.”

Sabeen Safi ‘26 found this quote particularly striking, commenting, “The most interesting part of the lecture was a quote he shared by Donna Haraway that stressed the importance of the tools and narratives we use in shaping our understanding of the world. Dr. Servitje studies culture to challenge systemic approaches within healthcare, which is unique.”

Victoria Jordan ‘25 also commented on this section, saying, “I think he did a really good job with building the foundation by explaining how culture and healthcare are infrastructures so the audience could understand how they intertwined to give monsters and zombies such a big impact for describing and explaining struggles in our world.”

For Servitje’s final section of the lecture, he expanded upon the world of monsters as it relates to modern healthcare and popular culture. To preface this topic, Servitje shared a quote from philosopher Antonio Gramsci that stated, “the old world is dying and the new world struggles to be born. Now is the time of monsters.”

“Dracula is a monster that represents the fear of all that is other,” Servitje



PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR MADDIE CILIENTO ‘25.

Lorenzo Servitje, Ph.D., M.P.H., presents a lecture in Miller Forum.

explains regarding Dracula and his relation to modern microbial resistance. “He is an opportunistic ‘pathogen’ who thrives in the conditions of modernity. He is fought in a very literal sense in past fiction and is metaphorically like a disease, sucking the blood from his victims and turning them into vampires as well.”

He then shifts his focus to the gothic novel of “Jekyll and Hyde,” in which Dr. Jekyll, a kind and well-respected scientist, transforms himself into his evil alter ego named Mr. Hyde. Concerning the healthcare field, this story alludes to the slippery nature of certain biomedical terminologies. “This figure is used to represent this kind of oscillation in one way or the other, but he’s just an average of two differences. And it’s not just that they’re essentially good or bad and doing things the right or wrong way, there’s a lot of gray in between.”

Servitje’s last topic included zombies and their impact on modern-day research. “There’s a long history of zombies with contemporary American culture. The very framing of zombies was thought about in question of both medical and legal jurisprudence.”

He touched on the evolution of zombies in the media over

the years. The representation of zombies in the past has coincided with the creation of the term “braindead” and thus gave the public a reference for the condition. Zombies have also been used as a pharmacological metaphor, with certain drugs being used in films to start zombie outbreaks and impair cognitive function in humans. Viral zombies made their way into the media as well as a result of a viral pandemic or bioweapons. His most recent example was from the popular show “The Last of Us,” in which “zombies are ‘real’ in nature and result from parasites or fungal pathogens,” according to Servitje. “There have been a lot of scientific papers after this that started to think about the relationship between positive fibrosis and different aspects of human behavior such as depression and sleep.”

Servitje concluded his unique lecture with one final quote from novelist and poet George Eliot, tying the role of monsters to the development of humans. “The growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs.”

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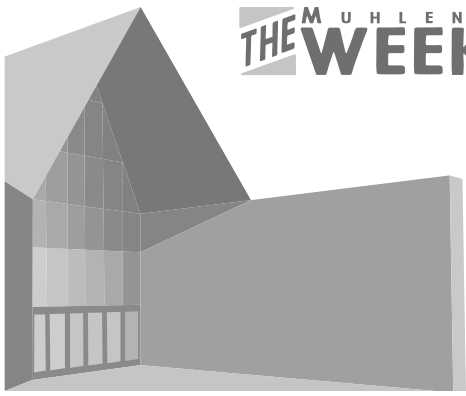
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THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY

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“If you are not doing what you love, you are wasting your time.”
- Billy Joel

Moyer gets a “midsummer” makeover

BY EMMA NORTHROP
STAFF WRITER

Traditional tellings of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” take place in the ancient city of Athens, Greece; however, the independent student production in collaboration with Students for Queer Advocacy [SQuAd] of “Love in Idleness” swaps out Greece for Greek life, having the role of the Athenian court filled by a Fraternity/Sorority council, placing Hermia in a sorority, and making Demetrius the epitome of a Fraternity boy. The story follows Hermia as the sorority council attempts to prevent her relationship with Lysander and set her up with Demetrius. The setting then swaps to a party, where “fairy” antics ensue in a decidedly sinister manner. Oberon and Puck place mysterious substances into Titania’s drink with the intent to obtain Titania’s dog, also drugging the unwitting Demetrius and Lysander in a failed attempt to right the “love square” between the two, Hermia and her friend Helena.

Co-director Emma Walter ‘24 expressed the reasoning



Midsummer makes its debut in Moyer Hall. Photo by Photo Editor Maddie Ciliento ‘25.

behind choosing to tell “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” in this sort of rendition stating, “I had long been fascinated by the fairies of this play and longed for their nefarious nature to be more explored. In talking with Gianna [Carnevalino ‘24], now back at Muhlenberg last spring, she brought up the fact that the play itself was about consent - and they suggested setting it within the college party environment. And from there, we started research. We talked to Nigel Semaj over Zoom and they gave us incredible advice and insight into classical

adaptation, Dr. Beatrice Bradley gave us wonderful academic recommendations, and Dr. Jeremy Teissere spoke to us about the science behind different party drugs we were considering.”

The play took place in Moyer Hall. Upon entering, participants were asked to choose a glow stick color based on their comfort level with interaction: green for contact and conversation, yellow for conversation and red for neither. Participants were then given a number (one or two) signifying their location for the starting scene. The

performance took place on the second and third floors of Moyer (ironically, a sorority formal was underway on the first floor), and crew members led the two groups of audience members to their starting locations. In these rooms, the audience witnessed the introductory scenes of the play, with Hermia, Lysander and Demetrius appearing before the Greek council. The characters engaged in intimate dances underneath a projection of a moon, and the audience was then dismissed to wander the halls of Moyer, where Puck checked their wristbands (glow sticks)

and let them into the party.

Walter discussed what went into bringing this experience to life, saying, “Both myself and my co-director, Carnevalino, went abroad to the Theater Academy of London program last fall. While we were there, we both saw ‘The Burnt City’ by the immersive theater company Punchdrunk. The production was a 95 percent pure dance adaptation of the stories of Agamemnon and Hecuba and it was utterly intoxicating.”

It was at this point that the piece became highly individualistic. In one room, the Mechanichorale, a collegiate Acapella group, practiced for their performance at the Greek life philanthropy event, while in another Puck and Oberon formulated a plan to obtain Titania’s dog. In yet another area, Lysander and Hermia discussed keeping their relationship a secret. Multiple tracks of the play occurred at once, so it was impossible to witness every moment. The actors conversed freely with audience members, making asides about how idiotic another character was or, in the case of Titania and Nic Bottom, a

[SEE MIDSUMMER PAGE 6](#)

ATR x DTD present Clishae and Delta P

BY SHAIYAN FIESEL
ASSISTANT A&C EDITOR

A-town Records (ATR), a student-run label and music association and the fraternity Delta Tau Delta (DTD) held a collab event on Nov. 4. The indie/rock band Clishae from Richmond, Virginia, and Delta P performed at the DTD house.

When asked about why Clishae was invited to Muhlenberg, Festival Coordinator for ATR Emma Ash ‘24 said, “Clishae is a Virginia-based band made up of four people. There’s Vinny, the lead guitarist, Cam, who is also a guitarist, Jaren who is the bassist and Dylan who is the drummer. And they are all our age, so I thought it would be really cool to bring a band that came from Muhlapalooza [ATR’s fall ‘23 music festival] and they had a wonderful reception. Everyone who watched them loved their energy, so I wanted to bring them back- and I happen to manage the band so it’s a cool connection. They were able to come here and play music to a really excited crowd. I think the way they perform, the infectious energy they have when they



Photo courtesy of A-town Records.

perform is vibrant and electric. I loved watching everyone’s faces light up in excitement and joy, they really know how to command a stage. And they had a blast on stage, and they said it was one of the best crowds they performed for.”

Having a collaboration with

a fraternity can seem like a surprising collaboration, however, Ash expressed that “The choice to collaborate with DTD came from a music festival DTD hosted a few years ago in the Red Doors. I really loved and still love their drive to be a place for students to go for

live music. So I met with Sully Grace ‘24 [a member of DTD] over the summer [to plan] this concert and [Grace] was all for it. So it was really great to work with the whole group of them because they’re all so passionate about music. And it’s so great to have ATR, who’s also really passionate about uplifting voices and musicians, specifically uplifting musicians voices on campus, also providing a space for like college-aged kids from other bands or from other schools as they see it, so DTD was all for it. And I’m really glad that it worked out.”

Label Director of ATR Daisy Cunningham ‘25 stated, “Hopefully this will lead the way for more house bands to have opportunities to play on campus, and to expand the live music scene at the college.”

ATR Production Assistant and audience member Marilyn Rajesh ‘26 said, “Clishae is such an awesome band and I’m so glad I got to see them perform! ATR and DTD did such a great job of hosting such an amazing event! I am now following Clishae on Spotify and it’s inspiring to see

original music that’s so cool.”

Audience member Isabella Metzger ‘24 stated, “It was a really fun time! It was really nice to experience live music on campus— I think that there’s a lot of opportunities for musicians on campus in the sense of theater and a capella, but there’s not as many opportunities for things like rock music or garage bands. It was really cool that the DTD and ATR gave that opportunity to both an on-campus band (that consists of Muhlenberg students) and an off-campus band (that doesn’t consist of Muhlenberg students). Both bands (Delta P and Clishae) were really talented and I had a great time dancing with my friends to their sets!”

Grace stated in reflection, “The DTD x ATR x Clishae Party was perhaps the most spectacular thing I’ve had the pleasure of witnessing. Live music has always been a core value of [the] Theta Chi chapter, and we’re thrilled to bring it back to Muhlenberg. All the guys

[SEE ATR PAGE 7](#)

Studio spotlight: “35MM”

By SAMANTHA BROOKS
STAFF WRITER

Theater allows individuals to express themselves and define their creativity. Similar to numerous other students attending Muhlenberg, Tommy Kelly ‘24, the director of “35MM,” considers theater a home, and he has for his entire life. He spent all of middle school and high school gunning for leads and working exclusively onstage. A great deal of his experience as a theater student at Muhlenberg has revolved around performance, playing Peter in “Call Me By Any Other Name... Just as Sweet,” “The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee” as Mitch Mahoney and a handful of smaller projects. But the last few years have helped him find a voice he did not even know they had: a creator behind the scenes.

This is not Kelly’s first time behind the table as a director at Muhlenberg– their directorial debut was “Kindred Spirits,” an original 45-minute play produced for the Red Door Play Festival in the spring of 2022, and he has workshopped a handful of written works over the past year– but they explain that ““35MM” is “the biggest production I have ever done, and I owe it to the Muhlenberg community for giving me the chance to shape my directorial approach and help me develop the confidence to step up to the plate.”

Kelly explains that “The best place to start with ‘35MM’ is to understand its nature as something of an introspective rabbit hole– it’s ambitious in what it presents and how it presents it, but the way the show bounces from one narrative to another runs the risk of losing the audience along the way.” Kelly expressed that because of this, “A big part of

our interpretation of ‘35MM’ is defining three things about the rabbit hole: where it starts, where it ends and who’s holding your hand when you first jump in. Thus, we entrusted a sense of audience surrogacy within the character of the Photographer, an artist who lives and breathes the work she devotes herself to– throughout the show, the Photographer is exploring the pages of an old scrapbook, flipping through page after page and trying to make sense of the bizarre photographs within it by visualizing the story behind every photo. These ideas are made reality by the Images, an abstract Greek chorus of figures whose identities are constantly changing to fit the narratives being written and rewritten within the Photographer’s mind. Every number in ‘35MM’ is about bringing the imagination of a creative mind to life using our own imagination, not only through the performances of the stories, but of the visual presentation of each story’s environment– lighting plays an integral role in painting all of the pictures throughout ‘35MM,’ bathing each vignette with a distinct aesthetic to match the feeling of the moment.”

“35MM” is a song cycle– a show composed of a series of songs related to one another through thematic ideas rather than a straightforward plot– exploring a single question: ‘If a picture is worth a thousand words, what about a photograph?’ The music, lyrics and story behind the musical numbers of “35MM” each draw inspiration from various photos taken by the husband of composer Ryan Scott Oliver. Each song discovers and extracts meaning from the photographs, exploring how life finds a way to shine through within still frames of time and space imprinted upon pieces of paper. In doing so, “35MM”

doesn’t just tell a single linear story; it invites the audience into more than a dozen vignettes.

While selecting this show, Kelly emphasized that it is “musically complex, lyrically intricate and its endless existential rumination on the human condition is, admittedly, a little pretentious at times. But above all else, ‘35MM’ is earnest.” People are often drawn to relatable shows, and a handful of the vignettes scattered about the show comprise something of a fragmented love story based on reality. Kelly notes that “In regards to the photographs inspiring ‘35MM,’ the man behind the camera is Matthew Murphy, the husband of composer Ryan Scott Oliver. It’s why there are so many songs about love in ‘35MM,’ and so many different kinds of love at that– first loves, forsaken loves, failed loves, love intertwined with loss, love so powerful that they irrevocably change someone for the better. And every single one of these stories are told with unflinching honesty, inviting the audience into every shred of emotion peeking out from the scenes played out upon these photos and drawing upon some semblance of real humanity even in its most fantastical and ridiculous moments.” In short, Kelly makes it clear that the show is always looking at the bigger picture, including the navigation of realistic relationships, diving through period pieces or homages to high fantasy, or simply waxing philosophy about how photographs are time capsules on paper. Thus, he noted that “The show digs up experience and emotion behind every story, every character, every emotion and it does so with zero hesitation.”

There are various messages hidden throughout the show that remind the audience to slow down, open their eyes

very good for vocal health.”

As there were large improvisational sections, the play was different each night. When I attended on Nov. 2, the Mechanichorale spent a longer segment of the play “passed out;” however, later shows got to enjoy a tipsy “bedtime story” from the characters on behalf of the children’s book drive occurring in the hallway. After the play reached the spot where it ended the first time through, the audience was graced with a performance from an a capella group, the Mechanichorale. The a capella group performed in the center stairs of Moyer, climbing on the railings and arousing many laughs from the audience. The final scene of the play featured the whole cast doing a dramatic dance around Oberon and Puck, punishing them for their misdeeds. “Love in Idleness” was so immersive that when the performers walked out, we almost went to follow them. Lillian Palluzzi ‘27, who



PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR, MADDIE CILIENTO ‘25

A rehearsal of “35mm,” directed by Tommy Kelly ‘24.

and focus because they will see that life finds a way to blossom anywhere, even in the most harrowing moments. Although it is easy to miss, Kelly says that “There’s a thesis hidden within a couple of keywords within the opening number of ‘35MM’: ‘Hold,’ ‘still,’ ‘focus,’ ‘there,’ ‘life;’ this conveys the message to hold still and focus, for there is life. This show serves as a reminder of how one does not necessarily need to look for the most grandiose assertions of presence or perseverance to admire humanity– sometimes, humanity is most beautiful in the moments less paid attention to.”

As a director, one must take on several challenges and roles. Throughout his experience directing “35MM,” Kelly noted that it is an exercise in euphoria underscored by a fair bit of anxiety. He compared it to finding a piece to fit into a puzzle, “You’re always moving forward, even if it’s little by little, and everytime the puzzle nears closer to completion, you try and

think about what it’s going to look like when you’ve finished, and the exhilaration never fails to rush through me. It’s easy to get overwhelmed by all of the information or to get wrapped up in what’s not working or what we aren’t able to achieve, but that’s going to happen no matter what. And when it does happen, your momentum isn’t gonna let up– you’re gonna keep moving forward, because the valleys are just as much a part of a process as the peaks. They make the victories all the more amazing to behold. And no amount of anxiety can undercut just how proud I am– of myself, of my creative team, of my actors, and of every single other person helping make ‘35MM’ a reality.”

The Muhlenberg Theatre Association’s Fall Studios Festival opens on Nov. 30 and closes on Dec. 3, and you can catch three performances of “35MM: A Musical Exhibition” spread out over the four days of the festival.

FROM **MIDSUMMER** PAGE 5
Mechanichorale member, asking for an “attendant” to dote on them.

“I had such a great experience during the rehearsal process and the show itself. The directors were fantastic and so ambitious with a great payoff. This was definitely a one of a kind experience and I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to perform in immersive theatre,” recounted Isabelle Peters ‘24, who played Lysander.

However, just as the resolution of the play approached, with announcements of love and the “undrugging” of characters, the play began again. This time, participants could witness scenes they had missed before and interact with characters they hadn’t previously met. Ella Zalot ‘27 commented on this, saying, “I think the immersive experience is very entertaining and something you don’t get to experience often. Getting to choose which parts you saw

first or second made it unique to every single person.” In my instance, this manifested as a discussion with Puck about how Fraternity life is not a cult and assisting Lysander in his attempts to find Helena.

The play was structured but still left ample room for improvisation on behalf of the actors. While the original lines of Shakespeare were used, there were also more modern injections. For example, Lysander argued with Helena that Demetrius was an asshole, to which she replied “He’s my asshole.” Furthermore, when searching for Lysander, Puck reasoned “Maybe he went through the air ducts.” The Mechanichorale had the greatest room for improvisation, with discussions of a “knitting circle” and allowing members to “live in delulu [delusional] land just a little bit.” They even bestowed great wisdom on the audience when, upon passing out at the party, they explained “napping is

played Flute, a member of the Mechanichorale, recalled this, stating, “I loved how everyone was confused at the end of the show!” After the performance ended, it was almost a shock to see the actors in the “real world” as they returned to the first floor with a reception of friends and applause.

Walter voiced what she hoped the audience would walk away from the experience with saying, “We wanted the audience to walk away with a darker understanding of Shakespeare’s “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” than it usually does. Shakespeare’s plays, even down to his comedies, have some truly chilling themes. The typical misogyny and racism as is expected, but also this theft of anatomy is rarely if ever discussed.”

Palluzzi went on to explain her experience as a cast member, stating “I’m new to this type of theatre, but it was so fun! The atmosphere was great and everyone was communicative.

The directors were peak– so accepting and chill.” Palluzzi mentioned how Muhlenberg hasn’t seen an interactive theatre piece of this magnitude since “Cordially”; hence, the medium was new to many of the cast members– making the piece’s great reception even more commendable. The post-show audience was buzzing with excitement, and Gabriella Damens ‘27 exemplified this experience by commenting, “I’ve never seen anything like it before. It was a really unique experience and I loved how there was a connection between the cast and audience.”

Walter finalized, “We also used the finale as another opportunity to be blatant with establishing who had done the wrong-doing. [Carnevalino]’s vision for it was brilliant and I can’t thank our incredible cast for their collaboration and enthusiasm for the message and execution of this project.”

Kander and Ebb find new life at ‘Berg

By EMMA HOWSON
STAFF WRITER

This past week’s production of “Sing Happy!: A Kander and Ebb Project” was an absolute delight to the senses. Directed by Visiting Assistant Theatre Professor James Stabp and music directed by Staff Accompanist and Music Instructor Vincent Trovato, the show was a musical revue filled with the songs of the prolific musical theater composer-lyricist team of John Kander and Fred Ebb.

It’s been a long while since I’ve seen a show of this type; they’re not usually my style. However, Kander and Ebb are a classic duo, and my friend Anthony Fix ‘27 was in the show, so I found myself seated in the Empie Theatre on Sunday afternoon. Let’s just say, I’m quite glad that I did.

The show consisted of a company of 13 actors who stayed on stage almost the entire time along with a live band present onstage with them. The set was barebones, with just some chairs and various props as needed, allowing the performers to completely capture the audience’s attention. And those performers were stars in every sense of the word.

Every actor in this show was a lead in their own right. Each of them had their own solo moments which complemented and reflected on the other

performers. I was particularly struck by Sidney Kaeb ‘24, Luke Enda McIntyre ‘25 and Josephine Glass ‘27, but I mean it when I say that everyone was stunning. The group numbers were beautiful, with interlocking harmonies that gave me chills multiple times. Many other audience members I talked to agreed that the show was enthralling. Caden Dowgin ‘27 said, “The show was excellent. Every performer was fantastic, and it really helped to show me some obscure Kander & Ebb I didn’t know about.”

Similar to the set, other production elements, such as costumes and lighting, were simple but effective; especially spotlights, which, while used sparingly, highlighted moments and images that will stick with me for long after the show ended.

“Sing Happy!” felt raw and intimate, even in the large space of Empie. Because the actors hardly ever left the stage, I had the pleasure of watching each of them be fully present in the moment no matter whether they were in the spotlight or not. The background was always as interesting as the foreground, which made for a very entertaining viewing experience.

What contributed most to this intimate feel was the connections between the actors. Marie E. Tohill ‘25 and Chiara Aiello ‘24 had an incredible moment in the middle of the show,



The company of “Sing Happy!” Photo by Marco Calderon.

singing about love and the fear of commitment. It ended with a beautiful hug between them which I must say brought tears to my eyes. It was a portrayal of a lesbian relationship devoid of queer pain, simply a story about two people who were afraid to take the next big step in their relationship. It warmed my heart and made me feel seen.

This is my second time seeing a departmental production at Muhlenberg. I’m impressed by the department’s range in type of show and tone. “The Labyrinth of Desire” was full of raucous laughter and queer joy, while “Sing Happy!” was a much more

meditative, warm experience. I appreciated both equally.

While I loved the show, I must admit that it wasn’t perfect. It was sometimes difficult to hear and/or understand the performers as they became drowned out by the band. Kander and Ebb were incredible because of the partnership of their music and lyrics, so losing the latter at certain points was frustrating. Additionally, the songs chosen for the show were obviously incredible, but they were somewhat one-note. Zac Rejonis ‘27 said, “They picked ballads for almost every song, and I wished they’d picked something funny.

But all the performers were really good.”

Still, my enjoyment of the show outweighs whatever criticisms I may have. To me, “Sing Happy!” was a reminder of why we make and still make musical theater. It is a genre that is uniquely heartfelt and powerful. Because of the latest Beatles single, I’ve been thinking a lot about the band. And this show reminded me of something that John Lennon said in 1968: “Talking is the slowest form of communicating. Music is much better.” That is why I love musical theater, and that is why I loved “Sing Happy!”

FROM **ATR** PAGE 5

in Clishae are incredible and I look forward to partnering with ATR again in the near future.”

Ash voiced, “By bringing bands to campus, I think ATR really wants to accomplish having a lively music scene, or wants to add to the lively music scene of campus. Kind of like what WMUH does by bringing in bands and also like all the student performers on campus too– I think bringing outside

bands to campus kind of stems from Muhlapalooza. Last year, when we brought in bands it was just so cool to see how the student body responded to that and really embraced the bands. And this really celebrated music. So I mean, by bringing bands to campus, it is totally for the students and to make sure that there’s more live music on campus.”

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Top 10 “Glee” covers that rival the originals

By KATHERINE CONLON & AMY SWARTZ
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF & GENERAL EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

After a wildly successful first edition of cover rankings, I am back with a vengeance. So, you thought I wasn’t objective; you wanted me to include your random soft-rock white man songs. Well, I reject these demands and say “NO!” I refuse to be influenced by gen-Xers (dad). This is why I am transporting you to another time and place: Lima, Ohio in the 2010s. That’s right, we’re doing the best “Glee” covers that are better than the originals. Why? Because. I. Can. And this time I am joined this time by fellow Gleek, General Editorial Assistant Amy Swartz.

10) **“Creep” (by Glee cast) (Amy’s pick):** Radiohead who? No, I’m serious, who are they? From my Gleek perspective, Rachel and Brody put them on the map. I listened to Radiohead’s original well after Glee’s version, and that was one too many. Nothing can top the tension between Rachel and Brody as they sing their last goodbye, once they reveal their true selves-- Brody being a prostitute, and Rachel still being hung up on Finn.

9) **“Telephone” (by Glee cast) (Katie’s pick):** In the season two premiere, Rachel bursts onto the screen with this Lady Gaga hit. In the scene, Rachel is attempting to one-up new student Sunshine who she eventually sends to a crack house (girlboss moment). While Gaga’s rendition is iconic, Rachel and Sunshine bring a level of feisty competition that the original lacks.

8) **“Rose’s Turn” (AKA Kurt’s Turn) (by Glee cast) (Katie’s**

pick): Wow, just wow. Golden Globe Winner Chris Colfpher ate with this one. Came hungry, left full! The lyric changes, the passion, the energy; it’s all perfection. We only ranked this iconic moment in “Glee” history this low because, unfortunately, Colfpher is a furry (joke!). Sorry Stephen Sondheim and Ethel Merman, you’re done.

7) **“It’s All Over” (by Glee cast) (Katie’s pick):** One of the more dramatic moments in “Glee” history (and that’s saying a lot), Iin this song, Mercedes creates a fictional world in which she airs out her grievances against the rest of the cast. She’s sick of being pushed to the back and forced to sing one high note at the end of every song. And honestly, as she should! Along with Mercedes’ STUNNING vocals the period costume design puts it over the edge, making it both an amazing listen and watch.

6) **“Don’t Stop Believin” (by Glee cast) (Amy’s pick):** “Glee” wouldn’t be “Glee” without this timeless Journey classic. Not only is it the most streamed song by the “Glee” cast, but it’s sung the most times out of any song on the show (seven!). It bookends the entire series, being sung in the first episode, and in the first part of the two-part finale. It’s what brings the New Directions together for the first time, grounds them throughout the series, and eventually brings them back at the end.

5) **“River Deep Mountain High” (by Glee cast) (Amy’s pick):** Let’s make it a trend to revamp 1960’s title tracks to studio albums. The pure joy that



Graphic courtesy of Editor-in-Chief Katherine Conlon ‘24.

completely enveloped me as I saw Mercedes and Santana not just sing together, but bond, will stay with me forever. Ike & Tina Turner meant for their song to take the stage once again in a show choir practice room. And I stand by it.

4) **“Paradise by the Dashboard Light” (by Glee cast) (Amy’s pick):** Thank goodness MeatLoaf sang the original version, because they gave plenty of room for the “Glee” cast to eat it up. Finn and Rachel take center stage with this performance, and lead the New Directions to their first EVER Nationals win! This performance lays it all out on stage, with Finn single- handedly carrying the New Directions on his back with this one. It’s their final song on the Nationals setlist, the one that seals the deal and secures the title of their “Glee” Golden Age.

3) **“Smooth Criminal” (by Glee cast) (Katie’s pick):** Annie

are you okay? No, I’m sure she’s not after listening to this cover! Michael Jackson can not compete with the level of sexual tension that comes with this song (especially from two people who are not attracted to each other in the least). The dueling cellos, the pacing around the room, the eye daggers all contribute to the vibe that makes this cover so iconic.

2) **“Run Joey Run” (by Glee cast) (Amy’s pick):** The leather jackets. The three love interests. The tension. Who wins Rachel’s love? Finn, Puck, Jesse St. James, all vying for Rachel’s love and affection. I know nothing about David Geddes, but I can only assume that he would be beyond proud that his 1975 soft-rock hit would be reimagined into the single most memorable love rectangle of the new millennium. And the cameo by the infamous (or just famous) Sandy Ryerson? What could get better than this.

1) **“Bohemian Rhapsody” (by Glee cast) (Katie’s pick):**

I think you all saw this coming. Freddie Mercury walked so Quinn could give birth. Jesse St. James (aka Johnathan Groff) delivers a PERFORMANCE with the New Direction’s top rival Vocal Adrenaline slaying behind him. In a Oscar-deserving cinematography moment, the action cuts back and forth between Jesse giving onstage and Quinn pushing a literal child (Beth) out of her body. As the music climaxes, Quinn’s baby crowns. Only the great mind of Ryan Murphy could have thought up such genius.

We hope you enjoyed our truly objective, God-given rankings. Never let anyone shame you for being a Gleek. The Muhlenberg Weekly is a safe space for Gleeks in every capacity. Stay tuned for a possible “Glee” mashup ranking..

A vehement defense of the Oxford comma

To quote my friend Zac, “This is what I think. You’re welcome.”

By EMMA HOWSON
STAFF WRITER

I am but a humble first-year student who has always been interested in journalism. I haven’t been able to pursue that interest for most of my life, however, because my high school didn’t have a paper. So, when I got to Muhlenberg, I was very excited to start working with The Weekly. On the Sept. 21 edition of the paper, I made my Weekly debut! I excitedly grabbed a copy off the newsstand and began reading the artist spotlight I had written. But as I read over the article, a feeling of righteous anger swept over me. In a sentence where I listed several things, I found that my Oxford comma was struck by the editors! I was censored!

If you can’t tell already this piece will contain quite a bit of sarcasm and hyperbole

Ever since then, anger has simmered within me, and I have finally found the words to express it.

If you’re not aware, the Oxford comma is a grammatical convention that is hotly debated among people like myself who spent their childhood reading instead of socializing. It occurs right before the “and” when you’re trying to list three or more things in a sentence. For example: “my favorite pieces of punctuation are the semicolon, the em dash and the Oxford comma.”

You might never have noticed that little comma, but it gets many people rather heated. My brother, for instance, thinks it’s stupid. And I, unlike him, am correct. But why am I correct? I’m so glad you asked!

The purpose of punctuation is to keep written language clear and to indicate where you should pause within or between

sentences. Without punctuation, reading anything would be much harder, and meanings would be lost in a sea of words. Now, to demonstrate my point, try saying this out loud (no, seriously, even if you’re sitting in d-hall or something): “the Oxford comma is cool, interesting, and lovely.”

First of all, thank you for saying that! I couldn’t agree more. Secondly, notice how you paused ever so slightly after “interesting.” The Oxford comma is the written expression of a natural hesitation we add in our speech to indicate the end of an idea. And if you’re reading that same list on a piece of paper, the comma makes it clear where the penultimate item ends. Simply put, the Oxford comma makes a sentence straightforward and easy to understand. Why would anyone be against its use?

But let’s be real; aside from me, who the hell cares? It’s a comma that appears in a very specific

context, a concept that almost exclusively exists in English and is improper in quite a few styles of writing—including most journalistic styles, which is why The Weekly editors removed my Oxford commas. You’re probably wondering, “why is she getting so worked up over a comma?”

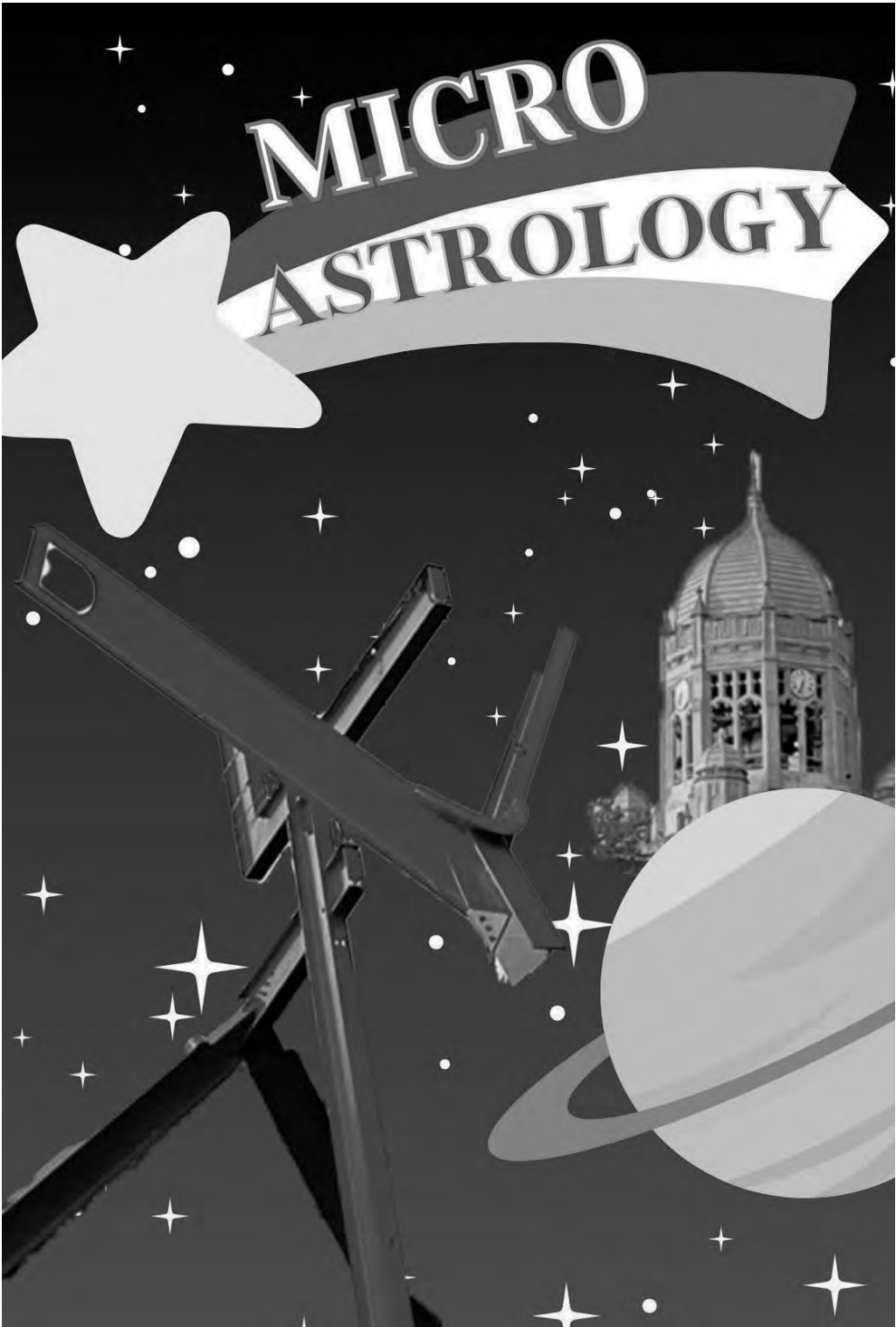
I, like many of us, enjoy picking little hills to die on. The Oxford comma is one of mine (I also like to argue that water is not necessarily wet, but that’s a discussion for another day). In an age where there’s a lot of very serious things to argue about, I find it comforting to have something silly that I can passionately defend. Plus, I think it’s really important to be clear in communication, especially during a time when more than ever, our messages are text-based; on social media or over DMs, we lose the nuances of facial expression, body language and tone of voice present in face-

to-face conversation. To me, the Oxford comma is a necessary part of clear communication, and it’s a piece of punctuation that I’ll continue to use all my life.

I encourage you to find something inconsequential in your life to be adamant about. Be a little stubborn—within reason, of course—and you’ll find it brings you a spark of joy. Because even if you’re non-confrontational, having strong convictions about something is, I find, calming to the mind.

And if you’re still not convinced of the greatness of the Oxford comma, just consider this: my mom uses the Oxford comma. And what are you gonna do, argue with my mom?!

The Weekly editorial team has removed all Oxford commas that do not exist within examples (sorry, Emma).



Tiny horoscopes for a tiny campus

MICRO-ASTROLOGY

Weekly advice and predictions

Aquarius (January 20 – February 18)
Somehow you manage to spill something on yourself every day this week. Maybe stick to water and foods that don't stain.

Pisces (February 19 – March 20)
You're so bored you seriously look into how much it would cost to rent a hot air balloon. Fortunately, you'll come to your senses and realize that just buying one is a much better investment.

Aries (March 21 – April 19)
Looking to push yourself this week? Get a pudding cup from GQ and eat it looking at the "Glut and Guzzle" display in the CA. Good luck.

Taurus (April 20 – May 20)
This week someone tells you to be more flexible. You take this literally, and start following a 30-day yoga challenge on YouTube.

Gemini (May 21 – June 20)
This week you're disappointed with the lack of magic in the world. Order a cloak and a deer skull online and be the ominous forest spirit you wish to see in the world.

Cancer (June 21 – July 22)
You're extra sensitive this week. Don't be surprised if you get upset over something trivial; like the expression "you hit the nail on the head." Why would someone do that? The nail wasn't doing anything to anyone!

Leo (July 23 – August 22)
You're feeling unoriginal right now. Try recycling some material; have you made a "that's what she said" joke recently?

Virgo (August 23 – September 22)
At some point this week you will be overcome with the passionate need to build something with Lincoln Logs. Follow that impulse.

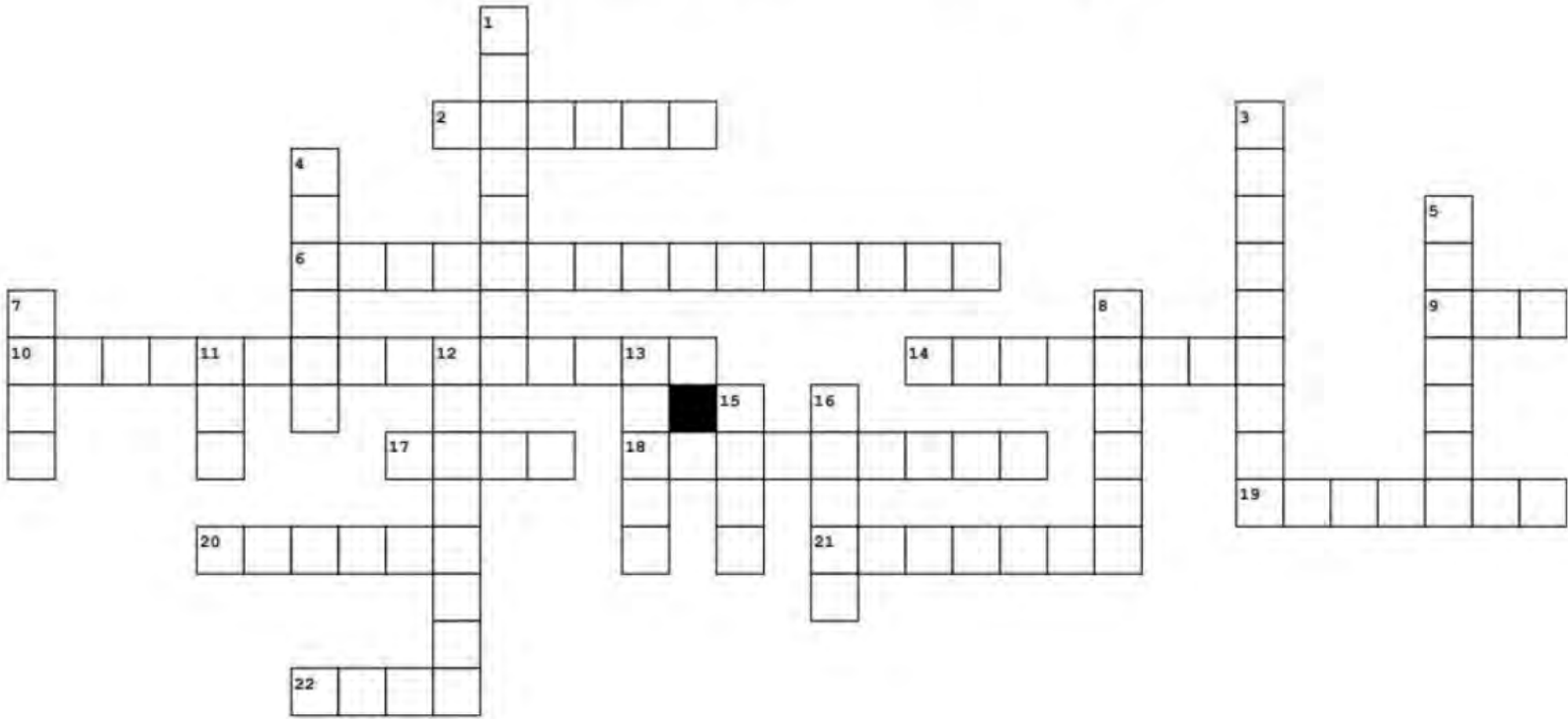
Libra (September 23 – October 22)
Having trouble practicing gratitude? Maybe think back to The Great Toilet Paper Shortage of 2020 and appreciate not having to single-square it.

Scorpio (October 23 – November 21)
This might just be the week to tackle that drawer of random crap you keep throwing things in. Then again, if the drawer can still close there's really no rush is there?

Sagittarius (November 22 – December 21)
This week you buy a bunch of fruit to make an elaborate DIY edible arrangement. Unfortunately, by the time you get home you're over the idea and are left with a bunch of fruit and no intention to do anything with it.

Capricorn (December 22 – January 19)
I'm not condoning violence, but I am saying that sometimes you need to stomp on someone's toes really hard to get your point across. For legal reasons, this is a joke.

Words with the Weekly



Across

- 2. Best newspaper ever (no bias included).
- 6. Student-written MTA Studio show that you should totally go see.
- 9. Where you may hear Taylor Swift's "All Too Well," or the color of our doors.
- 10. My GQ order, and probably yours too.
- 14. ___ Key.
- 17. Tower that chimes.
- 18. Fun night of dance and fun.
- 19. Local business supported by many a Muhlenberg student.
- 20. With 15 down.
- 21. Where you go when you need to check out a bike.
- 22. Where one may acquire a liquid bean.

Down

- 1. Smoooooth criminal of the LSC.
- 3. ___ Campaign (student-run "Boundless").
- 4. Mule ___ Friday.
- 5. Who you should salute on Feb. 19.
- 7. Radio station that just celebrated a birthday.
- 8. Micro-Astrology info source.
- 11. Beloved d-hall worker, famous on YikYak.
- 12. Greek life replacement for theater kids.
- 13. Office located in Prosser.
- 15. With 20 across, beautiful CA art exhibit.
- 16. Our mascot.

‘Berg wrestling emerges as preseason favorite

By PENELOPE SCHNEIDER
STAFF WRITER

In the realm of collegiate wrestling, anticipation ran high as the Centennial Conference unveiled its much-anticipated preseason rankings for the upcoming season. These rankings, shaped by an annual poll among conference head coaches, provide an exciting preview of the battles to come on the wrestling mat. Amidst this exhilarating backdrop, the Muhlenberg men’s wrestling team has emerged as the preseason favorite, proudly securing the coveted number-one position in the rankings.

With their impressive track record and a legacy of success, the Mules clinched two first-place votes, amassing a total of 22 points in the preseason poll. This dominant performance placed them ahead of the pack, setting a thrilling stage for the battles to come. Notable among their rivals is the defending champion, Ursinus, who secured 19 points along with two first-place votes, marking them as formidable competitors. Merchant Marine also joins the fray with 17 points and one first-place vote, standing shoulder to shoulder with McDaniel, who tallied 16 points and claimed one first-place vote. The roster is completed by Johns Hopkins with 9 points and Gettysburg with seven points, promising a season filled with intense competition.

The Muhlenberg men’s wrestling team wasted no time in bringing their wrestling prowess to the mat. They kicked off the season with an impressive performance at Alvernia’s Tonee Ellis Memorial Tournament, securing a notable third-place finish. This event marked a strong start to their campaign, featuring 17 de-

termined Mules who were eager to showcase their tenacity and talent.

Among the standout performances at the tournament was the remarkable debut of Evan Mendez ‘27, who etched his name in the annals of collegiate wrestling. Mendez displayed his exceptional skills by securing victory in all five of his bouts, an impressive feat considering three of those wins came by way of falls. Notably, Mendez took control of the 149-pound bracket, claiming the title as his own. This outstanding performance heralds a promising start to his collegiate wrestling journey and solidifies him as a talent to watch.

Mendez expressed positivity in future endeavors saying, “This upcoming season I am looking forward to seeing what competition is like at a new level. As well to see how our team does all together, and hopefully shock some people on our uprising.” Mendez has been putting in the extra work and plans to carry out a winning record and qualify for the national tournament.

The Mules weren’t done there. The competition also revealed the potential for another championship within their grasp, particularly in the 125-pound weight class. Brian McCaw ‘25 and CJ Horvath ‘27 both demonstrated their prowess throughout the tournament. McCaw’s journey to the final included three notable victories, featuring a pin and a technical fall. Unfortunately, fate dictated that they did not meet on the mat, depriving the audience of a thrilling showdown between two remarkable athletes.

Nonetheless, McCaw is eager to prove himself this upcoming season. With an emphasis on competition and team, he states,



PHOTO COURTESY OF MUHLENBERG’S ZENFOLIO.

The Men’s Wrestling season begins.

“The goal I’ve set is to compete at the highest level I can for everything. With an all-American in front of me in the lineup, some of the toughest matches I’ll have will be in our practice room and I look forward to competing at every forefront.” The Muhlenberg wrestling team has pushed each other to the limits and its payoff is obvious.

The Muhlenberg squad boasted more than a few standouts. Ben Krauss ‘26, a dominant force on the mat, pinned his way to third place in the 285-pound category. His four pins showcased his strength and precision, earning him a well-deserved place on the podium. Meanwhile, Ryan Fairchild ‘26 put on a display at 184 pounds, securing fourth place. Fairchild’s journey was marked by two pins and a technical fall, demonstrating his command of the mat.

At 165 pounds, the tournament provided some captivating moments, with Riley McHale ‘24 and Nick Stump ‘27 both advancing to the consolation final. Yet, perhaps what adds a dash of intrigue is the fact that they did not face each other in a matchup that could have been nothing short of electric. Notably, Stump’s road to the consolation final included a sweet taste of revenge as he secured a victory over a regionally ranked opponent from Western New England who had bested him earlier in the day.

In the 133-pound weight class, Ricky Caamano ‘24 demonstrated extraordinary resilience, recording three consecutive pins. One of these pins stood out as particularly thrilling, with Caamano executing it while trailing 12-9 in the final 15 seconds, a testament to his unyielding spirit. Another star performer in the 141-pound

category was David Rosenfarb ‘26, who secured three consecutive victories, two of them by first-period pins, showcasing his command over his opponents.

In terms of team scores, the Mules secured a commendable third place with 83.5 points, displaying their collective strength and determination. Alvernia took the top spot with 117.5 points, followed closely by Delaware Valley with 116.5. Amid this highly competitive field, the Muhlenberg men’s wrestling team’s impressive performance was undeniable.

The Tonee Ellis Memorial Tournament heralded an exciting beginning to the season for the Muhlenberg men’s wrestling team, with a depth that includes a great team culture of welcoming talented newcomers and role models to pave the way.

FANTASY FOOTBALL FIRST-TIMER



By ADDISON STAR
STAFF WRITER

My fantasy team sucks. I’m currently 1-6 and I don’t know what to do. Every week, I am diligent in swapping out my players, knowing who is injured and on bye weeks. And yet, I always fall short. I always end with a score lower than projected and another loss. Like I said, I don’t know what to do.

After doing some research, I’ve found that I should follow the ideology of the paperclip story. The story follows a man who took a single paperclip and traded it for objects of increasing value until he got a house. In this situation, I wouldn’t be gunning for a house but rather better players who would improve the overall outcome of my team. The thought is that I could trade

someone like Austin Ekeler for Alvin Kamara and Adam Thielen. The benefit of this is that these two players would net more together than Ekeler would alone. In this situation, I’m being more gussy than I should be because Kamara and Thielen are ranked the same or higher than Ekeler, and any fantasy manager worth his salt would see that this trade is benefiting me more than them. However, my friend Connor has been hounding me for weeks to trade with him for Ekeler so I have a good feeling about him accepting the trade.

Unfortunately, Connor is smarter than I gave him credit for and rejected my trade offer. I’m going to take another look at his team and find players who are worth less to make an offer for, sticking more to the heart of the strategy.

REASONS TO JOIN...

M U H L E N B E R G
THE WEEKLY

YOU WANT TO:



AMPLIFY STUDENT VOICES



RECORD MUHLENBERG HISTORY



JOIN AN AWESOME COMMUNITY



& CREATE!

A season to remember

By NOAH BERGER
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

The Muhlenberg men’s soccer team had a successful season, with the Mules ultimately ending as the runner-up in the Centennial Conference. Despite the tough loss to Johns Hopkins in the championship game, the Mules grew as a team along the way and formed a memorable sense of team camaraderie.

Chris Richards ‘23 touched upon the season as a whole and how he felt the Mules grew as a team. Richards said, “This season was filled with ups and downs, obviously we had some great results this season but we also had our fair share of bumps along the way. But I can confidently say that this team grew immensely along the way.” Given that Richards is a fifth-year senior, he has experienced playing with multiple teams with different goals in mind. However, Richards seemed confident that during this season, the individual bonds among the team members grew stronger.

Sam Roberts ’27 talked about his first year playing for the Mules: “As a freshman, I didn’t know almost any of the guys on the team. They brought us freshmen in and we immediately became a family. From the first fitness test of preseason to now, I can say that all 35 guys on this

team gave it everything they had all year long. We won, lost and tied together but that has only made us a tighter group. I could not ask for a better group of guys to have played my freshman season with.”

One of the biggest highlights of the season for the Mules was reaching the championship game in the Centennial Conference. During the semi-finals, Evan Schlotterbeck ‘25 had a header as his first career goal to boost the Mules to the championship game. Although the result was not in their favor, the Mules are proud of how far they have come. Richards talked about the strategy going into the game. He reflected, “Going up against Hopkins is no easy task, they are a very organized team and play a very methodical style of soccer. They make it difficult for teams to defend them as they have a lot of moving pieces and very talented players. When we first matched up against them, we sat in a bit more and let them try to come at us, just waiting for a mistake to capitalize on. Our approach was similar to this game but with a bit more of a strategic press. Hopkins did a good job of eliminating our threats and thwarting any dangerous opportunities we had.”

In terms of postseason play specifically, Roberts touched upon the atmosphere during the

playoffs. He said, “Postseason play is something special. Everything we have been working towards for the last few months all comes down to just a few moments in the postseason. The atmosphere is electric and makes playing that much more exciting.”

Something that brings the team together is the strategies and mantras that they set. Roberts touched on some of the strategies the team had together this year. He said, “The team was very versatile, changing formations on the fly and replacing players because of injuries, with our deep roster making us difficult to play against. The starting 11 did not define our team this year, rather the impact that was created off of our bench is what dictated most games.”

Richards reflected on his final game with the Mules. He said, “The [championship] game was truly heartbreaking as we had our opportunities to score and change the course of the game, but things didn’t fall our way and we got unlucky. Everyone on our team gave it their all and I couldn’t be more proud of our team and how hard everyone worked all season. They will continue to be successful and competitive in years to come with all the talent we have.”



Muhlenberg’s SoccerI team faces Johns Hopkins.

Mules defeat F&M on Senior night

By LUCY ATWOOD
STAFF WRITER

On Saturday, Nov. 4, the Muhlenberg football team played Franklin and Marshall College (F&M). This rivalry game was anticipated by many, especially ‘Berg’s seniors. The game served as the team’s senior night, where they honored and celebrated their senior class of 2024. The Mules were well prepared knowing this game would be a good battle. The Mules defeated F&M in double-overtime fashion. The mules battled hard throughout the whole game. Tight End James Nye ‘24 brought the energy by completing an 18-yard, one-handed catch, leading the Mules to a 21-7 lead at the end of the first half. The Diplomats took the lead in the second half, scoring three consecutive touchdowns, bringing the game score to 35-28 with the Mules trailing behind. The Mule’s defense forced a punt and turnover with 1:17 remaining on the clock in the fourth quarter. Wide Receiver Christopher Ardito ‘24 caught a 35-yard touchdown (TD) pass with 35 seconds remaining, leading the teams into overtime. “When I caught that ball and saw the end zone all I thought was this is our game now we found a way to score backed up with no timeouts there’s no way we lose now,” said Ardito. The Mules



Muhlenberg’s Football team faces F&M.

started strong with Ardito receiving another TD, putting the Mules ahead 42-35. The Diplomats took the lead at the start of the second overtime. The Mules dug deep and found a way out, driving the ball into the end zone with a catch from Nye, ending the game and giving Muhlenberg another victory. Ardito completed his second career 100-yard game. “The defense stepped up in the second OT [overtime] and the offensive mindset was the

games back in our hands let’s go finish it, and we did just that.”

Captain and Left Tackle Zachary Greenberg ‘24 reflects on the pre-game mentality of the team and on what it takes to dig deep and find a way to victory. “Seeing our team be able to compete at such a high caliber for all 60 minutes is essential for a team to be successful down the stretch. The no-quit mentality we constantly emphasize came into full display when we had to battle

back from a touchdown deficit and later drive down the field to tie the game as time expired. Our late coach, Coach Donnelly, as he always preached, ‘Find A Way To Win.’ These ‘Find A Way’ moments can present themselves at any point in the game, and finding a way when your back is against the wall separates the good from great football teams.”

The Mules have a strong culture, and it has taken them far. Saturday’s win served as a great

example of this. Greenberg continues, “Coming out on top after a double OT win was a direct result of the 60-minute performance from all three phases of our team. Winning this game, especially on Senior Day, is a great way to show our appreciation to the seniors, with one final win on Scotty Wood. It also is a great time to show appreciation for the coaches, who invest so much and dedicate themselves to these seniors over their careers here, not only making them great football players but even better men. As all the seniors and fifth-years can agree, our success over the past four years is due to the highest level of Division III coaching a player can experience. It also is a way to show our appreciation to our parents, family, and support groups, as they have sacrificed so much to allow us to be in the positions we are in today. Celebrating senior day shows how quickly four years go by. The experience at Muhlenberg has been nothing short of amazing, with all the thanks going to the team, coaches, and trainers.”

There was no better way to celebrate the long-time commitment of seniors and fifth-year graduates than with a win, go Mules!

THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY / SPORTS

Women’s volleyball makes playoffs



Photo courtesy of Muhlenberg Athletics Department.

The volleyball team was able to clinch the sixth and final seed of the Centennial Conference playoffs after a 3-1 victory over Dickinson College in a “win or go home” match.

By DYLAN ROSENBLATT
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

The Muhlenberg volleyball team entered the final match of their regular season versus Dickinson College, tied for seventh in the Centennial Conference (CC). With a victory against the Dickinson Red Devils, the Mules would match them with a conference record of 4-6, but hold the advantage in the head-to-head tiebreaker and clinch the final seed of the CC playoffs. However, with a loss, Dickinson would be the team to clinch the sixth seed and the Mules’ 2023 volleyball season would come to an end.

Fortunately, the Mules– led by Captains Esmae Oehler ‘25 and Christie Marcin ‘26– were able to get the victory, winning 3-1, in

this “win or go home” matchup against the Red Devils. In what was in essence a playoff game, given the winner of the match’s season continued and the loser’s ended, Marcin led the charge with 18 kills and a career-high 23 digs. Oehler wasn’t far behind, finishing with ten kills and 23 digs.

Oehler spoke about the team’s mindset coming into the match. “Our coach told us before the game that it isn’t every day we get to play a game of such meaning and to remember why we love volleyball. There was a lot of pressure on us that game, but there was pressure for them as well. I’m so proud of how we played and more so how we came together even when we were down. It’s easy to separate and indivi-

dualize when things get tough on the court, but we stayed strong and did exactly what we wanted to do, which was play together. I believe the unity we have will take us far.”

The team will now travel to Lancaster, Pa. to take on the Franklin & Marshall (F&M) Diplomats in a rematch of their playoff matchup from last year. The Diplomats have had the upper hand on the Mules over the past few years, as none of the current players on Muhlenberg’s roster have been able to win a set, let alone a match, versus

F&M over their careers. In the 2022 CC playoffs, F&M was able to dominate the Mules, holding them to under 16 points in two of the three sets.

The Diplomats continued their dominance this year as they finished with an overall record of 18-6, with three of those losses coming to teams that held national rankings of ninth, eleventh and twelfth.

Despite what’s happened in the past, the team only cares about the future, which is a fresh matchup versus the Diplomats. “Despite losing to F&M earlier in the season, I’m excited for the opportunity to play them again. I don’t think we’re dwelling on the past, but more just trying to enjoy the moment. Our win against Dickinson showed us that if we

play loose and have fun, good things will happen. The key to the playoffs is to just enjoy it and I always think of how proud my younger self would be. Post-season volleyball is fun, and we’re blessed to have the opportunity to be here for the second year in a row,” stated Oehler.

If Muhlenberg can escape Lancaster with a victory, they would have to face off against Johns Hopkins University– who has won the CC volleyball championship the past six seasons in a row– in the semi-final matchup.

But as of now, the team’s not thinking about what comes after F&M, as their sole focus right now is getting a win against the Diplomats for the first time since 2017.

“I believe the unity we have will take us far.”

Coming up this week in

SPORTS

Nov. 9 - 15

Cross Country

MUHLENBERG
at
NCAA METRO REGIONAL

Saturday, Nov. 11 @ 11:00 a.m.
DREAM Park - Logan Twp., NJ

Men’s Wrestling

MUHLENBERG
vs
THE COLLEGE OF NJ

Saturday, Nov. 11 @ 11:00 a.m.
Deitrich Field House

Women’s Basketball

MUHLENBERG
vs
DESALES

Tuesday, Nov. 14 @ 7:30 p.m.
Memorial Hall

Men’s Basketball

MUHLENBERG
vs
MORAVIAN

Wednesday, Nov. 15 @ 7:30 p.m.
Memorial Hall

A new start for GARs

Faculty reevaluates General Academic Requirement system for class of 2028

By SAMANTHA TEMPKIN
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Last April, the Weekly reported on a potential new curriculum proposed by the faculty. After several months of debate and discussion, the faculty voted on a new curriculum, entitled Pathways of Discovery, at the end of last semester. Next fall, the class of 2028 will be the first group to enroll with the new curriculum, while current students will continue with the current General Academic Requirements (GARs).

Unlike the 18 GARs currently required (such as HU and SL) this new curriculum has much fewer requirements. In addition to the First-Year Seminar (FYS), which isn't going away, the new curriculum will require only eight additional courses spanning all the various subjects offered here at Muhlenberg. This curriculum will also include a long discussed yet not implemented GAR called Race and Power in the American Experience. While this requirement appears in the new

curriculum, it is possible that current students will also have to fulfill this requirement since it has been in the College's plans for a while. Although students will still need to take a Writing Intensive (W) within their major, they will only need one W rather than the two currently required.

Since the new curriculum was voted in, faculty have been working to approve the specific language within the learning goals for each requirement.

In the most recent faculty meeting on Nov. 10, the faculty debated the learning goals for one of the new GARs, Intercultural Communications (IC). Upon the presentation of the proposed learning goals, Erika M. Sutherland, Ph.D., proposed an amendment that she developed with her department. As the chair of the College's Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures as well as an associate professor of Spanish, Sutherland expressed her concern that the learning goals focused too little on learning a foreign language.

For this reason, the proposed amendment offered students the choice of studying either a language other than English or diverse cultural perspectives. This amendment sparked a lot of debate but was ultimately approved with a vote by show of hands.

Faculty members will continue to vote on the learning goals for each new requirement at upcoming meetings.

The work discussed at this recent meeting is part of a long process of creating, approving and now implementing this new curriculum. The faculty who are leading the task force to implement the curriculum explained that students who may be avoiding certain subjects, either consciously or unconsciously, will be encouraged to engage with new subjects. Rather than starting a student off with the question of their major, this curriculum aims for students to begin their studies with the goal of exploring multiple ways

SEE GARs PAGE 4



PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR MADDIE CLIENTO '25.

The outside view of Ettinger.

New clubs SGA approved

By MATTHEW BARESH
NEWS EDITOR

The most recent Student Government Association (SGA) general assembly meeting on Nov. 8 included various club approvals and new ideas for how to improve campus. The meeting began with general reports from each position on the executive board, followed by a discussion of a Campus Health Day being held next semester for the well-being of the students. President Jake Forstein '23 noted that the executive board met with Dean Williams and President Harring to extend invites for both the annual diversity dinner and the upcoming SGA town hall.

The first club discussion was MESA, or the Middle Eastern Student Association. MESA is designed as an affinity group for Middle Eastern students on

campus to create a fun and supportive environment. The organization has goals to host various speakers and hold fundraisers to support the club and its members. MESA is created to be an outlet for others to learn more about Middle Eastern culture in a respectful space. Discourse arose regarding the group being perceived as a Palestinian advocacy group, however, MESA would be open to discussions with other groups on campus with other viewpoints. The organization's Instagram profile was also brought into question, with their appearance on Instagram not necessarily aligning with what was discussed, with a Palestinian flag and the words "I stand with Palestine" as their profile picture. The general assembly found it difficult to understand whether MESA is an advocacy group or an affinity association

SEE SGA PAGE 4

Embracing the journey

Understanding the first-generation college experience.

By KABIR BURMAN
STAFF WRITER

Last Wednesday evening, students and faculty gathered on the College Green to celebrate a unique feat. This was a moment to celebrate the stories of resilience, perseverance and success within the first-generation college students' community. Celebrating First Generation Student Day on Nov. 8, the event not only commemorated this significant accomplishment but also provided a space to share the diverse experiences of those who have paved a path for themselves and future generations.

From the delicious food spread, to the lawn games arranged for attendees, the atmosphere was charged with a sense of unity and shared accomplishment. Often defined as a student whose parents did not complete a four-year degree at a college or university, Alaina Hall '27 made it a point to highlight that not all students were the same. "Though this characteristic is common to all of us, I think the commonalities end there because we all have vastly different backgrounds and paths that led us to this point." Hall explained that her "father had the opportunity to attend college, but he found that it just wasn't something he was interested in pursuing. Other parents may not have even had the opportunity at all, like my mother, which makes me forever grateful that I was able to have the same opportunity as my father," reflected Hall. Meanwhile, others such as Harriet

SEE FIRST GEN PAGE 2

Arts & Culture

Studio spotlight on "Twelfth Night (Or What You Will)"

Campus Voices

Amy Swartz '26 talks about her a cappella rankings.

Sports

Men's basketball tips off their season.

THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY

Serving the Muhlenberg College Community since 1883

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CAMPUS SAFETY NOTES

11/1
Medical—There was an injured employee in the Baker Center for the Arts

11/5
Alcohol Violation—There was an underage drinking violation in Prosser Hall
Fight—There was a fight on 22nd Street
Alcohol Violation—There was a report of public intoxication on 22nd Street

11/6
Suspicious Person—There was a suspicious person at a sorority house

Noise Complaint—There was a noise complaint in Brown Hall
Medical—There was a sick student who was transported by Campus Safety

11/7
Medical—There was an injured visitor in Seegers Union
Stalking—There was a report of stalking in Seegers Union

11/9
Medical—There was an injured student in East Hall

CORRECTIONS

In the Nov. 2 issue, Assistant Photo Editor Kira Bretsky ‘27 was credited for a photo taken by Jem Berney ‘26 in the article “Cross country puts their best foot forward” on page 10.

Introducing MESA

By SHAIYAN FEISAL
ASSISTANT A&C EDITOR

The Middle Eastern Student Association (MESA) is in the process of being developed at Muhlenberg. The executive board consists of only first-year students. Pamela Najm ‘27, imminent president, said, “It’s supposed to be a club where Middle Eastern students feel safe, have fun and can make connections with each other.”

On Nov. 8, the MESA executive board went to the Student Government Association’s (SGA) General Assembly meeting in hopes of getting the club officially approved. Jake Forstein ‘24, student body president, stated that in order for a club to be approved by SGA they must “deliver a brief presentation at an SGA General Assembly meeting, which will include a Q&A.” Then, “SGA will vote on the final determination of organization status.”

Najm stated, “We went into the SGA Assembly meeting with pure intentions of creating a club for underrepresented Middle Eastern students.” Zayna Shadid ‘27, imminent vice president, said, “We felt as if we were bombarded with redundant questions during the presentation. It was the

constituents and the SGA who were asking us these questions, but it was mostly the constituents.” Najm noted, “We provided clear and concise answers repeatedly, but it felt like the SGA and the constituents didn’t understand the purpose of MESA.”

Forstein said, “There was some confusion because the Instagram profile picture and first post both expressed support for Palestine and did not include Israel as part of the flags represented in the Middle East, which caused overall confusion about the club’s mission of inclusion. While we intended to prevent the conversation from getting repetitive, I think a lot of members of SGA and other constituents were still confused or felt that their questions were not being addressed, which meant that some questions were asked multiple times.”

Forstein stated, “[A]t that time, I asked our vice president, Andrew [Buckwalter ‘24], to poll the representatives present to see if SGA members felt comfortable voting with the information they had at that time, and a majority of members did not seem comfortable, so we decided to table the vote [to recognize the group].”

Najm and Shadid voiced that “We wanted this club to focus on

the culture of the Middle East including dance, food, language, customs, music, etc. as well as bringing in speakers regarding the Middle East and hosting events regarding Middle Eastern culture.” When discussing the creation of the club to SGA, the Palestine-Israel conflict was brought up. In regards to what was said at the SGA assembly, Secretary Sultan Almosbeh ‘27 stated, “Our views as a club don’t reflect the intention of creating the club, it just reflects the need as a club to discuss the ongoing issues in the Middle East.”

On Nov. 9, the executive board of MESA met with the Community Engagement committee. In a joint statement, Najm, Shadid and Almosbeh reflected that “it sounded like SGA was confused with the intentions of the club. By going to this meeting there was clarification about our ideology and we better understood each other. It was more organized, respectful and peaceful compared to the general assembly. We have hope for Wednesday [Nov. 15] [general assembly] meeting, and we look forward to the meeting in hopes of getting approved.”

Forstein commented that “we [MESA and the Campus Engagement committee] had a really productive conversation



A graphic representing the Middle Eastern Student Association.

that helped SGA members better understand the club’s goal of representing Arab and underrepresented students.”

On Nov. 15, the SGA general assembly decided whether or not this student affinity group will be approved on campus, as of press time this decision has not been made. Shadid commented how the last General Assembly meeting was, “Disappointing... it could have been more civil, productive and constructive.” Forstein explained that moving

the vote “was not at all intended to prevent MESA from being approved, or to shut down their process. This was an intentional decision to ensure SGA had all the information it needed, and to alleviate any further confusion so that representatives would not be voting against a group just because they had lingering questions that could easily be answered in a smaller group setting.”

PHOTO COURTESY OF PAMELA NAJM ‘27

Serving those who have served

By SAMANTHA BROOKS
STAFF WRITER

On Nov. 10, Muhlenberg celebrated Veterans Day with the Muhlenberg College Division of Graduate and Continuing Education’s (GCE) Open House. At this event, not only were campus tours offered to allow individuals to experience Muhlenberg’s campus, but visitors had the opportunity to learn more about the College and its support for veterans and their families. Attendees were able to learn about the variety of Muhlenberg’s programs, the flexible course offerings and support services tailored to military-affiliated students. The resource fair was also held to explore the assets available to veterans and military families such as financial aid options and career development opportunities.

Muhlenberg offers over 25 programs for veterans and their families. These include accelerated and traditional Bachelor’s degrees and teacher certifications that are offered in flexible scheduling options including hybrid learning, evening and weekend classes. This allows adult learners to pursue their education while balancing work and family life. Additionally, the School of Graduate Studies is committed to providing graduate education that enhances career outcomes and creates impactful experiences to develop each



The outside view of Fahy Commons.

student’s capacity for a life of leadership, service and professional growth. Current undergraduates have the opportunity to take advantage of 4+1 programs for a Masters of Arts in Teaching and Masters of Applied Analytics. A Graduate Certificate in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) and a Master’s in Organizational Leadership with concentrations in Human Resources, Non-Profit Leadership and DEIB are also offered.

Nicole Barela-Vess, program development manager for GCE at the College and a captain of

the Pennsylvania Army National Guard, US Army, is in charge of developing, improving and implementing new graduate programming and curriculum. These offerings aim to empower adult learners, non-traditional students and veteran, service member and military spouse communities. She expresses that “We offer veteran-friendly, service member-friendly and military spouse-friendly programming that fits their lifestyle and empowers success because we understand what it means to be an adult-learner, non-traditional student and

what it means to serve. We serve those who serve!”

Muhlenberg also has a Yellow Ribbon Program, which allows veterans to complete their degree for free, with tuition and fees that are fully covered for veterans with 100 percent eligibility under the G.I. Bill. Muhlenberg’s Veterans Portal explains that the College “has partnered with the US Department of Veterans Affairs in offering this scholarship, which covers the difference between the cost of tuition and the reimbursed amount provided by the post 9/11 G.I.

Bill, thereby covering 100% of the tuition for eligible veterans.” Barela-Vess added that “We have been a Yellow Ribbon Program institution for more than ten years. For two years in a row, the Division of Graduate and Continuing Education had been named a Military Friendly School by Victory Media, a nationally recognized service-disabled veteran-owned business. Recently, the Pennsylvania National Guard Association named us as a Guard-Friendly school.”

In addition to these numerous programs and opportunities that Muhlenberg has for veterans and their families, Barela-Vess said that “The Veteran, Service Member and Military Spouse is an awesome affinity group and often an underrepresented community— with their own language, systems and challenges— in higher education. It is very diverse within its own affinity group with a specific language and outlook that is sometimes hard to explain to others. Within its communities are members of other communities— LGBTQ+, Latinx, BIPOC, Asian American and Pacific Islander— all veterans. And their families, spouses and children serve too as they carry the load of service as well.” Clearly, Muhlenberg is extremely passionate about providing veterans and military families with programs and resources to allow them to continue their education and gain crucial life skills.

FROM **FIRST GEN** PAGE 1

Komlatse ‘25 chose to define these students with characteristics such as “resilient, hardworking and always defying odds.” Some may argue that these are essential qualities for first-generation students, given the unique set of challenges they face on a daily basis. “I believe a common experience amongst first-generation students is feeling lonely pertaining to academic-related issues because our parents often do not understand what we are

learning, which makes it difficult to share our academic struggles with them,” said Komlatse.

From navigating the college application process to understanding the intricacies of financial aid and college paperwork, these students often did not have the luxury of simply turning to their parents for assistance like many of their peers did. Instead, they often had to navigate these journeys by themselves. Komlatse highlighted that “some hardships I faced coming to college was figuring out where I wanted to

go to school and deciding if I even fit in the environment I was planning on putting myself in.”

Yet, that changed once they found themselves at Allentown’s 2400 Chew Street. They highlighted the College’s extended support for these students: “Coming to college, there was so much my parents and I did not know, but my high school and Muhlenberg College itself provided us with so many resources and reassurances that helped make the transition smoother,” explained Hall. Komlatse added that she

thinks that “the College has done enough to accommodate my needs by making sure a community for first-gen students is available where support is provided when needed but as usual, there is always room for improvement.”


Whatever those support measures may be, at the end of the day, these students realize that just like the campfires that helped light the event on that dark November evening, they were themselves bright spots serving as beacons of hope for their families and for those

coming after them. Highlighting the same, Komlatse says that she is “not only studying and will be obtaining my Bachelor’s degree for myself, but I am also doing it for the next generation in my family. This mission serves as an extra fuel to succeed, and my identity as a first-gen student tells the story of my roots and where I envision myself.”

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FROM GARS PAGE 1

of knowing. In anticipation of the challenges that will result from this refiguring of the GARs, a representative of the implementation task force likened the implementation process to playing a game at a party: It is very difficult to be the person in charge of explaining the rules as each player has a different learning style, so it is best to “play open a few rounds so no one is out.” This thought process applies to students, as this new curriculum means to give them more academic freedom to explore diverse subjects, as well as to faculty who are orchestrating these changes and trusting the process.

The new system discussed in this faculty meeting alone emphasizes the drastic changes Muhlenberg will undergo in the near future. Current students who have expressed frustration and feelings of stress with fulfilling GARs can only hope that future students will not experience the same academic pressures. Gabi Levinger-Louie ‘25 says, “I understand the purpose of GARs and I think it’s important for people to learn skills like critical thinking, analyzing primary sources, writing essays, etc., but personally, I know I struggle with math and science a lot. It’s hard because there is no option for me to take those GARs as a pass/fail class. It makes some of the GAR requirements unnecessarily stressful. I had to drop my math GAR because of this.”

FROM SGA PAGE 1



due to their Instagram profile being perceived as contradicting their goal of an inclusive environment. The vote was postponed to a later week so that SGA could better understand MESA’s mission and goals.

The next club up for approval was the Latin-American and Caribbean dance group. The club aims to serve as an affinity group to showcase Latin American and Caribbean cultures and teach community members about Latin American and Caribbean dance culture and have its members perform dances. Conversations around the heritage, traditions and history of this region’s dance culture will be held frequently. The club was approved.

Voguress, a student fashion

club, was presented next, planning to serve as a space for students to freely express themselves through fashion and learn from one another. Voguress hopes to host fashion shows, presentations about cultural fashion, presentations from designers and clothing upcycling initiatives. A recent Google Form showed 21 students are already interested in the club, with one student of Japanese descent, in particular, wanting to focus on cultural clothing from Asia. The club hopes to apply this similar train of thought to many other cultures in the near future. Voguress also plans to host trips to local thrift stores and a get-together to celebrate the launch of the club. The club was approved.

The Harry Potter Club was next in line, aiming to create an environment surrounding the Harry Potter series via movie showings and discussions between fans of the franchise. With ten students already showing interest in the club, the meetings will be based on their interests. It was remarked that the club seemed loose with few foundational structures in place such as an executive board or goals for the future. The club acknowledged that J.K. Rowling has become a controversial figure in recent years, but assured representatives that they would be strictly focused on Harry Potter and keep her views separate. The club was approved.

The last club to be presented was the Badminton Club. This club would give students a space to play and learn more about the sport. The high equipment expenses include rackets, shuttlecocks and nets. The club would function similarly to Intramural Soccer and Volleyball, with weekly meetings in a welcoming environment. The club was approved.

Aside from club proposals, new ideas for the campus improvement project were proposed. The top priority ideas included ice machines for dorms on campus, new furniture in dorm lounges and a bus running to and from Bethlehem on the weekends. The bus idea came with concerns regarding the

one-time drop-off and pick-up schedule and the responsibility of intoxicated students. Lower priority ideas included the installation of a central firepit, closed caption machines for campus events, a ramen, udon and pho machine such as the Yo Kai Express and printers in residence halls.

Additional reporting by Evan Schlotterbeck ‘25.

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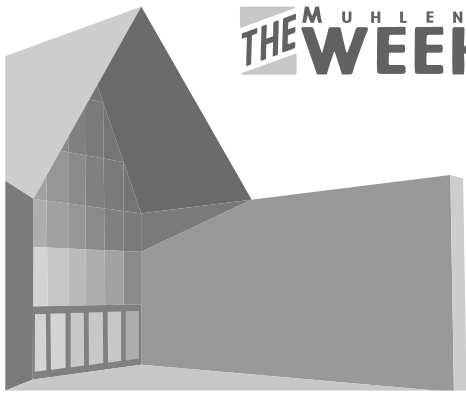
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THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY

ARTS & CULTURE

“Our feelings are our most genuine paths to knowledge.”

- Audre Lorde

Taking a step: Muhlenberg’s attempts at equity in the Theatre & Dance Department

BY MEGAN HANSEN
CAMPUS VOICES EDITOR

On Nov. 9, the Muhlenberg Theatre & Dance Department hosted Kaja Dunn; an intimacy professional, equity arts consultant and associate professor at Carnegie Mellon University. Students were able to attend a “Race and the Arts Workshop” as well as a working/listening session. Dunn also offered this workshop for faculty and staff members within the department in addition to her student-oriented work. This is just one step of the initiative to create more equitable spaces within the Muhlenberg performing arts community.

“Though individuals in our department were practicing antiracist pedagogies prior to this, the seminal moment that caused the entirety of the faculty to direct collective energy toward a culture of antiracism occurred in the summer of 2020 when a substantial coalition of Theatre & Dance students and alumni [were] empowered and inspired by the nationwide frustrations around histories of anti-Blackness in arts organizations,” says Gabriel Dean, writer-in-residence and visiting professor of English and theatre. “Antiracism is at the heart of my pedagogy and centered in the body of work



PHOTO COURTESY OF KAJADUNN.COM

Headshot of Professor Kaja Dunn.

I’ve penned for the stage and I’m excited to be part of a department that wants to put it at the center of our values. Right now, the biggest challenge, in my estimation, is getting everyone on the same page about what antiracism actually means and what work it will entail collectively and individually.”

Dunn has been brought in to help Muhlenberg achieve this goal. The workshops helped to

facilitate a conversation about how the department has been tackling topics such as racism and identity in their shows and the classes they offer. Dunn guided the discussion by asking engaging questions and helping students to formulate productive language to describe their feelings and experiences. She acts as a liaison between students and faculty in order to determine what has and has

not been beneficial in terms of creating a truly equitable space at Muhlenberg. Professor of Theatre Leticia Robles-Moreno, Ph.D., comments, “We would be a stronger department when we all join difficult conversations willingly and actively, without getting defensive or shutting down potential dialogues to avoid being called out. And on this note, I think we would be a stronger department when we are able to call people in, to invite everyone to the conversation, because we all want, genuinely and in solidarity, to heal the harm that has been done, in order to create space for all.”

Dunn’s afternoon workshop was especially constructive, as it acted as an open forum where students could discuss their grievances. Many students came forward in speaking about their experiences, calling upon the department to put more care into the processes of developing curricula and show selections. They expressed that they hope to see more diversity training amongst faculty, more examples of causal representation, necessary discussions about equity in course curriculums and more workshops such as the “Theater of the Oppressed” held by Julian Boal, Ph.D., at Muhlenberg on Oct. 13. There was even a hopeful call for a curriculum which further encourages collaboration with

other course prefixes (i.e ENG, HST, AFS etc.), which talk about different histories and identities within the department.

Hannah Scarlatoiu ‘26 points out some positive experiences in department productions that she hopes to see more of. “In my experience with ‘Labyrinth,’ before even signing up to audition I emailed the directors asking if really anyone was allowed to audition... The directors also said, before auditions, that they wanted a diverse cast. And they were successful in having that diversity (not even in just race, but in gender and sexuality, too). Diversity that was thoughtful of what roles students would play,” she remarked. “It’s the way these professors specifically handled not only the casting but the processes, as well. For ‘Labyrinth,’ there were lots of careful discussions surrounding any and all heavy topics (mainly suicidal ideation in transgender, gender fluid, nonbinary, etc. individuals. Also the eurocentric perceptions of the telenovela style), which says a lot considering it was generally a comedic show.”

Scarlatoiu highlights show selection and casting processes from a student perspective, as well as the dialogue surrounding it. “The main concerns are about avoiding catering to the

SEE **EQUITY** PAGE 7

Red Door Play Festival premieres

BY EMMA NORTHROP
STAFF WRITER

The Red Door Play Festival, organized by the Muhlenberg Theatre Association (MTA), took place this past weekend, Nov. 11-12. The performances showcased seven different plays and were coordinated by Kayla Hartman ‘24 and Sof Oberg ‘26, with assistant Skylyn Ellison ‘27. The festival occurs every semester, serving as an opportunity for student actors, directors and stage managers to come together and build experience in an open and creative environment.

The first play shown during Sunday’s performance was “Area Code,” written by K Evans and directed by Shelby Mejia ‘24. “Area Code” explores the relationship between characters Quinn and Hannah. Despite a previous conflict, Hannah goes to pick up Quinn after someone

calls saying she is drunk. Quinn doesn’t remember who she is or even her own name, but asks Hannah to tell her stories about Hannah’s life. Throughout the play, flashbacks reveal that Hannah and Quinn were in a committed relationship where Quinn helped Hannah to embrace her identity as a member of the LGBTQ+ community.

Mejia spoke on directing this piece, stating, “New works and queer shows are my passion, so doing ‘Area Code’ was such a gift. It was performed one other time at a different college so finding this show was quite difficult, but I’m so glad I did. While it has its joyful and romantic moments, the story contains so many challenges when two people who just want to be in love have to face a society that won’t accept them as they are.” Mejia then went on to say, “Sitting back and watching my actors work this



Alec Gould ‘26 and Gray Douglass ‘27 perform in ‘Murmurs’, a Red Doors Show. weekend, I was amazed how they were able to balance the humor and emotional intensity of the piece so well and create a strong full-picture for our audience to enjoy. It was wonderful and I hope people enjoyed joining us

PHOTO COURTESY OF BELLA CASTILLO ‘25

character Josh as he navigates strained familial relationships during the holiday seasons with the support of his partner Mark. In describing the writing process, Belloise explained, “Writing this show, I mainly wanted a heartwarming Christmas story that the characters had to fight/work for. In one scene, Josh (myself) would be spilling his heart to Mark, referencing his feelings about his absent father, and in other scenes, they’d be flirting. I think the strong tone shifts were difficult to pull off, but I think they worked well in this story!”

However, this performance was not without challenges, Belloise mentions, “We definitely struggled through typical issues that most directors face with scheduling and the like, and I did need to step in along with the stage manager [Sam Tempkin

for a ride on our chaotic, gay emotional rollercoaster!” The second show to be performed was “A Good Christmas,” which was both written and directed by Steven Belloise ‘25. The play follows the

SEE **RED** PAGE 6

Studio spotlight: “Twelfth Night (Or What You Will)”

By EMMA HOWSON
STAFF WRITER

Even if you don’t know the plot, you’ve definitely heard of Shakespeare’s “Twelfth Night.” Like many of Shakespeare’s plays, it has intense undertones of queerness and sexuality, but, as Director Becca Millevoi ‘24 told me, “he ends up tying a straight bow on that queerness.” Millevoi and the other students working on the Muhlenberg Theater Association’s (MTA) production of “Twelfth Night (Or What You Will)” have set out to correct that.

Millevoi is not new to directing. “I assistant directed some shows back home, but I didn’t really think about it as something I wanted to explore as an artist until I came to Muhlenberg.” As a theatre and music double major, she’s been involved with a lot of productions as an actor during her time on campus. “I was in ‘Miss You Like Hell’ sophomore year and ‘Little Prince.’ This past fall I went to the Accademia dell’Arte and that taught me a lot about devising.” This show is the second thing she’s ever directed on campus, the first being a play she also wrote which was performed last semester in the New Play Reading Series (NPRS) festival.

FROM RED PAGE 5

‘25] last minute to fill some of the roles, but I think that’s part of what makes live theater beautiful.”

“A Good Christmas” was followed by Lady Gregory’s “Spreading the News,” directed by Samuel Roter ‘25. This play depicts an Irish town that is thrown into turmoil after an eyewitness account gets repeated and warped until the original act, returning a hayfork, becomes the murder of its intended recipient. The actors were very committed to using Irish accents



Griffin Nielsen ‘27 and Tyler Motlasz ‘26 perform in ‘Just a Stage He’s Going Through’, a Red Doors Show. Photo by Bella Castillo ‘25.

Millevoi was not originally at the head of the project. “I was originally brought on as an assistant director because of my devising experience in Italy,” she told me. But because of creative differences within the team behind the show “...I had to take over. It was difficult.”

“There were some bumps and the cast was not super happy with where things were going, so we revamped things about halfway through the process. Now we’re in a really good place and the cast has really bonded. It’s been really stressful but I’ve learned a lot from this process.”

Part of the difficulty of the process was figuring out what exactly the script would be. This show is not your standard “Twelfth Night.” Millevoi said, “The way Shakespeare wrote ‘Twelfth Night’—there are these allusions to queerness, but... [he] tries to hide it at the end. We make it more obvious. We didn’t alter any text, we just took away parts to make it shorter. Any Shakespearian language is from the original text. We changed the ending to make it reflect the queerness in the story.” The setting of the play, both in terms of time and place is left purposefully vague. My favorite deviation from the original script, however, has to be this: “There’s a big dance

and did so throughout the play. Essentially a game of telephone gone horribly awry, the play was well received by the audience and garnered some of the most intense laughter of the night.

The next play in the set was “Just a Stage He’s Going Through,” written by Pat Cook and directed by Elaine Landry ‘24 and Julianne Lucas ‘24. The play follows the main character, Dwight, as he navigates through a world that appears to him as a stage yet to all the other roles as everyday life. Dwight often addressed the audience, as he could “see” them due

number at the end.”

What makes “Twelfth Night” different from the other shows in MTA’s Fall Studios Festival is its devised nature. As Millevoi said, it does not stick to the original script but is truly a creation of everyone involved in the production. “The way I like to do my devising work,” Millevoi said, “is I like to have the cast and the creative team to have a very equal say. We had the cast come together to devise the script. It’s chopped together in the best way possible and I’m very proud of them. I’m lucky enough to work with talented actors who understand what I see. With devising, you take it step by step and it’s been very collaborative.”

But the script isn’t the only electrifying part of the production. When asked what part excited her the most, Millevoi responded, “I’m really excited for the costumes. Every named character falls into their own respective time period, keeping up with the unknown vibe. I’m really excited to see them.”

The MTA production of “Twelfth Night” is emblematic of why we still put on Shakespeare’s works, even though it’s been over 400 years since his last play was written. We are constantly finding new

ways to reinvent these stories, and the characters contained within them have resonated with audiences in every interaction of these tales.”

Proposal,” written by Anton Chekhov and directed by Ellie McKissick ‘26. As the title suggests, this play follows a young man who comes to propose to his neighbor’s daughter; however, he keeps entering arguments with the two, whether it be about ownership of land or whose dog is a better hunting companion.

This take on Chekhov was heavily influenced by the exploration of gender, which McKissick describes in stating, “When it came to casting, I knew I wanted to work with a group of non-male actors. I’m deeply interested in how patriarchy exists onstage, especially when the bodies performing aren’t male. While very funny, ‘A Marriage Proposal’ is a play riddled with patriarchy. Natalya, played by Natalie McElhinny ‘25, has a line referencing the proposal that Ivan, played by Iris Jordan ‘26, makes, ‘All Papa said was: ‘Go inside there’s a merchant come to collect his goods.’ [This] made me cringe every single rehearsal because of how messed up it is. With a deeply patriarchal play like this, it was really fun to play with gender and to see what happened. That was something I reassured the cast about, I wasn’t asking them to pretend to exist in bodies that they didn’t have.”

Tyler Motlasz ‘26, Dwight in “Just a Stage He’s Going Through,” recounts their Red Doors experience as “a great way to help support your friends and other students in their first experiences of directing or acting. It’s a learning process the entire way through, but it is still so much fun.”

The fifth play of the night was “Lord Byron’s Love Letter,” written by Tennessee Williams and directed by Natalie McElhinny ‘25. Within the play, a Matron traveler, in New Orleans for the Mardi Gras parade, wanders into a house that advertises owning one of Lord Byron’s love letters.

“Lord Byron’s Love Letter” was followed by “A Marriage



The company of “Twelfth Night (Or What You Will)” during a rehearsal.

ways to reinvent these stories, and the characters contained within them have resonated with audiences in every interaction of these tales.

Millevoi wants, more than anything else, for the audience to enjoy themselves. “I would like the audience to have fun and see Shakespeare’s writing in a new light, and not take everything at face value.” She encourages them to ask, “How can we have more

fun with Shakespeare?” and to discover new things about well-loved material. “I want to give a spotlight to certain identities that haven’t had that before.”

“I hope everyone has a good time. Lean into it and enjoy it. It’s fun and campy.”

The MTA Fall Studios Festival runs from Nov. 30 to Dec. 3. “Twelfth Night (Or What You Will)” will be performed three times throughout the festival.

under the guise of watching a baseball game. Director Borges commented on the experience, stating, “The process for ‘Murmurs’ went by so fast but I’m so glad we took the time we had to carefully craft Jason and Les’ story into a show that I’m extremely proud of. This show will always have a special place in my heart because I find so much gratification in telling queer stories, and I’m extremely thankful to have had the opportunity to tell this one with such great people.”

Audience members were also eager to share their perspectives on the festival. Daniella Zalot ‘27 stated, “All of the performances were well put together- each one was unique and had something new to offer. It was a great time!” Maddie Davidson ‘25 added to this, sharing, “I think it’s empowering to hear and watch student-driven art... more things should be organized and carried out by students in general. There’s a lot of creative brilliance here that we are tapping into, and these are the moments where I see it happening and it’s awesome and beautiful and exciting!”

The final play of the night was “Murmurs,” written by Scott C Sickles and directed by Dominick Borges ‘27. The play follows the characters Jason and Les, who are in Jason’s room

ways to reinvent these stories, and the characters contained within them have resonated with audiences in every interaction of these tales.”

FROM **EQUITY** PAGE 5

majority of white students and focusing too much on the traumatic history of People of Color (POC),” she says. “There are so many reasons pertaining outside of Muhlenberg as to why our theater department is mostly white students... Kaja Dunn brought up a great point in doing shows that call for POC so that prospective students of color can see that Muhlenberg is a place for them. So I find it a little troubling when I hear white students say that the department should be catering to its majority. In my opinion, there is no issue in having reserved opportunities for students of color because without them, we can only assume most shows will continue to be a majority of white students. I feel the issues come from approaches and processes, not characters of color.”

There has recently been lots of emphasis placed on show processes. Many have called attention to who needs to be involved in order to truly create a more equitable space- intimacy coordinators, councilors, dramaturgs, etc.

“One of Professor Dunn’s main goals is to help us create a culture around antiracism in the department, a shared language and understanding of what consistent practice versus posturing means,” says Dean. “I think the better tomorrow for Theatre & Dance is here with each and every day we show up and do the work and probably most importantly, support each other in this difficult work rather

than shaming and blaming. White supremacy culture is centuries old, insidious, invisible and therefore largely unquestioned. It is accepted as the status quo. And so it is very difficult to undo. Holding each other accountable with love and grace will go a long way and make every tomorrow a better one. The goal in front of us right now, I think, is to have common parlance on what antiracism means, and to practice it in support of each other rather than weaponizing it to tear each other down. That goes for faculty, staff and students in the department, in my opinion.”

Dunn contributed to the forum by speaking about how Muhlenberg, as a Predominantly White Institution (PWI), frames the conversations we have about equity, emphasizing that it is important to speak from your own experiences as opposed to speaking on behalf of others and encouraging the community to reflect on the heaviness and responsibility placed on people of color adjuncts and guest artists to come in and fix our system. Dunn also talked about the challenges that come with making big changes to the way the department is structured, and the importance of taking small and careful, yet important steps in order to initiate effective change.

Robles-Moreno adds, “I always tell my students that anti-racism is a long-long-term project. We will not ‘solve racism’ with a workshop (even with such an amazing person as Kaja Dunn). There will be ups and downs, productive

moments and moments when microaggressions and white privilege will tear us down. But the anti-racism work must continue, within Muhlenberg and beyond. I hope our students can bring anti-racist action wherever they go, and that we are more and more equipped to offer them tools to transform the theater industry.”

Bringing in Dunn was just one of these steps, but the Theatre and Dance Department continues to introduce more, namely the formation of The Department of Theatre & Dance Anti-Racism Action Plan Working Group, headed by Dean, Robles-Morena, Professor of Theatre Troy Dwyer, Professor of Dance Anito Gavino and Professor of Theatre Matt Moore, Ph.D.

“Our task force was created last year to be a proactive body of faculty representatives that will continually and consistently address and bolster antiracism education and practices for our faculty, staff and students,” stated Dean. “We brought in Natasha Lindsey, Ph.D., from Central Washington University last year to help our faculty and staff begin to name the ways in which systemic racism and white supremacy culture has shown up in the department historically and in the present tense and to begin collectively dreaming antiracist ways forward, ways of unlearning and ways of reparation. We also hosted a couple of roundtable discussions among faculty and students about practices of identity conscious casting.”


Many faculty members see clear areas of improvement within the structure of both the curriculum and the department itself. “We know we need to make changes both in the curriculum and the co-curriculum to decenter whiteness and to engage meaningfully with cultural and theatrical traditions that are not Western-centered,” says Robles-Moreno. “There is a slow but sustained move towards decolonizing our syllabi, and to bring different voices to the season selection, so that students from the global majority are not tokenized and/or isolated. In an ideal world, anti-racism wouldn’t be reactive (meant to undo harm after it has been done) but a form of world-making (creating an environment where race relations exist as a form to build from difference and not pretending to not see what makes us unique).”

As for Dunn, she plans to hold Zoom meetings with theatre and dance faculty to talk about policy, and hold forums where they can express what they hope to see in the future of the department. She also plans to return in the spring to hold more discussions.

That being said, there is much more progress to be made in terms of general equity. Students and faculty continue to navigate the creation of safe and inclusive spaces, with a collective hope to create an environment of approachability and collaboration. However, this does not mean that the problems have disappeared. In fact, people have already expressed

concern about the casting process for next semester’s season- specifically for “Head Over Heels,” a musical featuring transgender and gender non-conforming characters.

Dean encourages students to continue with their involvement and avocation about these concerns. “Participate! Come to all the events with Kaja Dunn and any roundtables the department will be holding in the spring! More info about that will be forthcoming. The best way to help create the culture you want to see is to get educated about what that culture actually is and the ways in which we can go about making it together. It takes the entire community doing this work for it to be most immediately effective. True community is not top-down. It is a big table where everyone has a seat and everyone has enough to eat.”



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Not just another a cappella article....

By AMY SWARTZ
GENERAL EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

This is a tough article for me to write. I’ve had this idea for such a long time, but the courage that’s needed to say what I’m about to say cannot be overlooked. I’ve stirred awake night after night over this, thoughts of what writing this article says about me playing on loop in my brain. But I knew that I could no longer keep quiet about this. So, I’m going to call myself out before anyone can— I am a superfan of a capella on this campus and I am not ashamed. I do not use these words lightly. Chances are, if you’ve ever been to any a cappella concert, you’ve seen me there. Whether it be holding up a poster for my friends on stage, cheering a little too loudly to be considered proper audience etiquette, or dancing in the back, I’ve been there. I even beatboxed with CODA at Arts Marathon this semester. So yeah, I think I have the jurisdiction to take you on this journey that we’re all about to embark on, together. Here is my not-so-humble opinion of the ten best a cappella performances that my superfan eyes and ears have ever had the pleasure of witnessing:

10. **“Teach Me How To Pray” by Spelles/ “Skyfall” by Adele (Chaimonics):** Something about me: I love a mashup. But what do I love more? A mashup that I didn’t even know was a

mashup because it’s so cohesive. The contrast between the raspy low notes of “Teach Me How To Pray” and the angelic high notes of “Skyfall” is perfect. The soloists compliment each other, and play off of each other with the stage presence being completely encapsulating to the entire audience.

9. **“Long Train Runnin” by The Doobie Brothers (Dynamics):** Unfortunately, I’ve only been blessed to hear this song once so far. But mark my words, I will be in attendance at every single Dynamics performance in hopes to hear this again. The soloist commands this song and takes it by the reins and completely makes it her own, and it is simply dynamic.

8. **“Thank You” by Boyz II Men (InAcchord):** Nothing brings me more joy than seeing a full a cappella group arm in arm, singing together, and WITH a full-blown beatboxing solo. Are you kidding me? What could be better than this? Oh, only the fact that it’s their alumni song. When InAcchord calls up their alumni, they’re always accepted with open arms, and my heart becomes full. Embracing one another, singing in unison as the song ends, that’s what a cappella should be about.

7. **“Valerie” by The Zutons (Chaimonics):** If I need some extra serotonin pulsing through my veins, please someone give me a recording of this perfor-

mance in an IV. When I picture watching this, I see it as approximately 70 degrees and sunny, with a slight breeze in Parents Plaza, and everyone is having a fantastic time. It’s a fan favorite for a reason. You can see it from the smiles across the audience members, and you can see it from the smiles across the Chais on stage. It gets knocked out of the park every single time it’s performed, and I will never get tired of hearing it.

6. **“Bust Your Windows” by Jazmine Sullivan (InAcchord):** Listening to this performance makes me want to throw a chair at the wall and scream, in a good way. I can feel the anger, I can feel the chaos. I’ve seen people with their mouths agape during the entirety of this song (me included). The pure, unfiltered heart and soul seem to stay both in the building and in my ears long after the song is over.

5. **“Midnight” by Coldplay (AcaFellas):** Something about all of the AcaFellas singing a Coldplay song gets me every single time. What I love so dearly about this performance is its togetherness. When I look at the stage and see a row of flannels, all singing in perfect harmony, a tear comes to my eye. But it’s not about the flannels. It’s about the people wearing them. And I think that’s beautiful.

4. **“In The Air Tonight” by Phil Collins (Noteworthy):** Now I’m no a cappella perform-

er (obviously) but I do know a fantastic arrangement when I hear one. Collins’ song not only covers that, but simply surpasses it. The “oh lo-o-ord” little downwards step sells me this song right from the start. Every time the rest of the group matches lyrics with the soloist for parts of the performance, I’m convinced I’ve seen God. When I watch this performance, I feel like I’m walking through a dark October fog, looking for something that can never be found. It’s eerie, it’s moving and it’s incredible.

3. **“1950” by King Princess (CODA):** Man oh man, I cannot wait until I get to hear CODA perform this song again. I immediately tried to Shazam this song when I heard them sing it, and consequently asked myself how I had never heard it before. What sticks out to me in this performance is how soft it is. CODA, as a group, supporting their soloist with their a cappella vocals provides this balance with the soloist that is unlike any other. The cherry on top, of course, is the last lingering note from the soloist. Truly breathtaking.

2. **“Rich Girl” by Hall & Oates (AcaFellas):** I think Hall & Oates was made for collegiate-level a cappella. Something about the AcaFellas gracing their audience’s ears with “Rich Girl” is just right. The sweet serenade that this performance gives its listeners is pure perfection. You know the feeling when you gulp down crisp water that’s slightly below room temperature? That’s this song. When the day comes where “Rich Girl” is hopefully revived after its soloist graduated last spring, all will be right in the world again.

1. **“Yoü and I” by Lady Gaga (Dynamics):** Maybe it’s because I only had the joy of hearing this

Gaga hit once. Maybe it’s because I heard it as my freshman year was ending and the lyrics “something, something about this place” made me sob. Maybe it’s because there wasn’t a dry eye on the stage as Gaga was belted through the Event Space. It was probably a combination of the three. Whatever it was, I think about this performance and this song an unhealthy amount to say the least. The raw emotion and talent that completely overtook the stage was goosebump-inducing, and I would simply do anything to watch this performance one more time.

The emotional turmoil and struggle that went into making this list must be known. I say this wholeheartedly: I have never seen an a capella performance that I haven’t loved. Something about it just gets me every single time. If I could, I would have every a cappella performance ever playing on loop 24/7.

Though I very obviously have a tendency to over-exaggerate (only a little) about collegiate a cappella, I think there is something important that can be found somewhere in this article. There is so much raw talent on this campus. It speaks volumes that six different groups of students can all create a sound that is uniquely their own, and perform this sound with such vehement joy.

I get a cappella. I get the hype, I get the culture here. So call me a weird superfan, I don’t care, but I will unabashedly support the facet that creates another quirky subculture here on campus.

Cardinal and Gray and [REDACTED]

By LILY MAGOON
CAMPUS VOICES EDITOR

You may have noticed the gradual decor change taking place in the Wood Dining Commons over the past few weeks; the seats of the chairs are slowly being re-covered, and in the process changed from green to a traditional Muhlenberg Red. If this is the first time you’re hearing about this, let me open your eyes to an issue that has never left my mind over the course of my many—too many, one might say—years of being a student at Muhlenberg, one that goes far beyond The Wood Dining Commons.

The chairs being unceremoniously carted away, only to reappear in a few hours with a brand new look may seem like a simple change; an update in style and durability to an integral piece of Muhlenberg’s infrastructure. In actuality, this may be the beginning of the end to a part of our identity of Muhlenberg College that has thus far gone nearly completely unacknowledged by

faculty, staff and students. It’s time to break our silence, and finally talk candidly about this cultural taboo before we risk losing it forever: Muhlenberg’s unofficial third school color.

Sage, olive, laurel—whatever you want to call it; the kind of muted, vaguely pukey green is all over the interiors of our campus. The carpets in the CA, a few easy chairs in Java—you guessed it, the old seats of the dining hall chairs—even some walls are painted in this non-color. Yet, if you have the audacity to bring it up to anyone, you’re met with confused looks and choruses of “what do you mean? What unofficial third color?” For years I have been made to feel as though I were crazy, but today I risk my journalistic credibility to finally speak out on this issue before it is too late.

The Green was first brought to my attention by former Theatre Professor Curtis Dretsch way back in ye olde 2020. He referenced it in its capacity as the carpet in the Baker Theatre and the CA at large. If I recall correctly, he attributed the color

choice to the architect of the CA, though I’m not sure if he gave a reason for this decision. I am far from your average conspiracy theorist, but I find it interesting that the first and only reference to The Green that anyone I know of has made to the student body was made by a professor who very soon thereafter “retired.”

Could this be our own “Go Away Green,” the color Disney paints things it wants to discourage park-goers from looking at? Or, is it something more sinister? Is there a history behind The Green? It’s impossible for the casual observer to say when it began to take over campus, with the variety of building interiors it lurks in and after so many have been slowly redecorated over the years. Interestingly, it is present in the Fahy Commons, our newest building—which only opened in winter 2023. Why include The Green only to begin erasing it a semester later? What happened between then and now to make them want—need—to get rid of it?

The dining hall chairs are the perfect place to start if they want



Green and red dining hall chairs. Photo by Lily Magoon ‘24.

the change to go unnoticed. We use them everyday, but so rarely take the time to really look at them. Even I—someone particularly attuned to The Green’s presence on campus—took long enough to notice that half the chairs had already been replaced.

I don’t know what the future holds for The Green. I don’t

know why it’s being replaced. What I do know is that there’s more here than meets the eye, and if we want the chance to stop it before we lose our unofficial third color forever, we have to break our silence. It may be ugly, it may make absolutely no goddamn sense—but it’s ours, and I think it’s worth fighting for.

Prosser kids are tired. Literally.



By EMILY NALLY
STAFF WRITER

The outside view of Prosser. Photo by Photo Editor Maddie Cilento ‘25.

Since Wednesday, Nov. 1, Prosser’s fire alarms have gone off six times, each of which occurring at random moments throughout the day. The first two happened between 11 p.m. and 11:40 p.m. on the first. The next time the alarm went off was the following day at 6:30 a.m. Exhausted by the constant sleep interruptions, the students of Prosser lugged themselves through the day, anxious and sleepy. Though this was not the end. The alarm proceeded to go off three more times during the course of the week.

While there have been emails sent from Muhlenberg Housing to Prosser residents, this doesn’t take away from the fact that the students living in Prosser have been suffering from this purge-like alarm going off when they least expect it. What’s even more frustrating is being woken up only a few hours before your alarm is supposed to go off, then struggling to fall back asleep, only to be rudely awoken by your alarm shortly after. For the rest of the day, most students in Prosser were tired and sleep deprived, more than they normally would be. It doesn’t end there. With the anxiety of not knowing when the alarm would go off again, many students found themselves on edge. Kirsten Ward ‘27 talks about this on edge feeling, saying, “I think [the alarms] cause a lot more anxious and nervousness in my body, they definitely disrupted my nervous system,” and then goes on to say she felt nervous “wondering when the alarms were going to go off again” for the rest of the day.

Research shows how sudden alarms, especially fire alarms, can cause stress and anxiety to build in its listeners. There is a study that directly tests humans on how alarms affect them mentally. In this study, participants stayed four consecutive days and nights in a sleep laboratory where they were told an alarm would go off at different sound rates and random times in the day. The results from the experiment were quite revealing, showing how the subjects’ heart rates went up each day long after they heard the alarm, specifically when these alarms woke them

up at night. They suffered under stress just from this loud noise, and for the rest of the day, the researchers found that they were on edge and antsy.

Though there haven’t been any more fire alarm outbursts since Monday, Nov. 6, as thankfully fire safety vendors took the time to help resolve the issue, this should sound some figurative alarm in our heads, Prosser Hall is slowly deteriorating. While the jokes regarding Prosser are funny to make, they really aren’t far from the reality of living there. The hall, as many would agree, is in desperate need of renovation and change. The structure of the building is claustrophobic, holding many people in one building, giving no privacy. The building is almost always loud, even past quiet hours, and the smells that waft through the halls are suffocating. The lounge rooms are outdated and scare away most who live on the floor. The dryers barely work, with your clothes staying soaked until you’ve done three cycles of drying. Each room is allotted one small window that doesn’t even open. In all honesty, Prosser Hall in many ways can deter possible incoming students.

While of course it is unreasonable to imagine the entirety of Prosser being redone, it should be noted how the structural integrity of the building is affecting those who inhabit it. Possibly to your surprise, the way a building is set up has an immediate effect on one’s mental wellbeing. Poor-quality housing has been found to increase psychological distress, research has shown. Socially supportive relationships and the restoration from stress and fatigue all can be impacted by properties of the environment around you. When there are things like residential crowding and a loud noise source, psychological distress rises. The lack of daylight also can increase depressive symptoms. All these apply to Prosser Hall.

Gabby Zickmann ‘27 describes how Prosser makes her feel, saying quote, “[it] feels very enclosed and loud. It is always very loud. The layout of the building is very confusing.” Zickmann

goes on to explain how many students’ schedules “don’t match, which makes it hard to coexist with those in your dorms” and that in terms of the noise levels you “can’t bring it up to others in your hall because it doesn’t feel like a close environment to share that.”

So what can be done? Will the battle that is living in Prosser ever end? From a personal stance, small improvements can be made to the dorm that could lead to significant opinion changes regarding the building. Perhaps updating the lounge rooms by adding some decent, clean furniture could create a difference and actually make Prosser the community it was intended to be. At least making the basement lounge room a bit more presentable could invite students to spend more time there, bonding with each other and developing community driven relationships. Maybe there can be updates to the actual rooms themselves, like a replacement of floor or ceiling tiles. Ward communicated that “offering bigger rooms or more singles since the hall is already so crowded and maybe aim to be up to par with Walz Hall standard, since the building feels less conducive to studying and working compared to Walz.” While all of these things of course need time to happen, and more importantly, money, if it will help the student body, why shouldn’t it be done? You will never be able to get rid of that Prosser charm, but perhaps you can make the building more presentable, and well, livable to its students.

The possibility of Prosser ever being a “perfect” dorm is close to none, it will always be that first-year experience that will make you grateful for your own personal bathroom, but maybe it could be a little less, what many call it, “dirty Prosser.” For the benefit of Muhlenberg students, and incoming ones as well, perhaps it’s time for an update to the schools national treasure that is Prosser Hall.



Tiny horoscopes for a tiny campus
Weekly advice and predictions
communicated by Victor’s Lament

Aquarius (January 20 – February 18)
Stop worrying about your browser history. Your calculator history is WAY more embarrassing. 45+8? Really?

Pisces (February 19 – March 20)
You feel like that raccoon from that video that tried to wash cotton candy; every time you’re close to a breakthrough, it disappears right in front of your eyes. Stay optimistic, in the end the raccoon did get to eat some cotton candy.

Aries (March 21 – April 19)
You offend your partner by talking about your celebrity crushes. You apologize, and suggest they take it as constructive criticism. This does not go over well.

Taurus (April 20 – May 20)
You’re sad about someone this week. Don’t worry, you totally dodged a bullet; they’re a flat-earthier and they leave their grocery carts in the middle of the parking lot instead of putting them back.

Gemini (May 21 – June 20)
It’s impressive how much time you spend thinking about a completely irrational anxiety. It’s not good, but it’s impressive.

Cancer (June 21 – July 22)
This week you’ll flirt with the idea of finally doing the thing you keep saying you’ll do, but getting that close exhausts you and you take a nap instead.

Leo (July 23 – August 22)
Remember, the difference between a lawsuit and steak tartare is some spices and a good refrigerator. This is both a metaphor and a practical reminder.

Virgo (August 23 – September 22)
You are both the rusty nail and the tetanus shot. Revel in your versatility.

Libra (September 23 – October 22)
This week you are always going to feel like you have a tiny rock in your shoe, but when you take it off to try and get it out there won’t be anything there. Be strong.

Scorpio (October 23 – November 21)
You’re in desperate need of some self care, google “Punnett Square worksheets” and take a load off!

Sagittarius (November 22 – December 21)
The only people that say “age is just a number” are people who have been, are, or will be involved in a crime.

Capricorn (December 22 – January 19)
You might be a rat, but you’re a cute, non-plague carrying rat! Like a pet rat, or Remy from “Ratatouille”. A rat with a successful career ahead of them!

Men’s basketball tips off their season

The men’s basketball team begins the 2023-2024 season with a commanding win over Rosemont College.

By Dylan Rosenblatt
Senior Staff Writer

The Muhlenberg men’s basketball team opened their season on Saturday, Nov. 11, with a dominant 86-64 victory over Rosemont College. When the game finished, four of the five starters for the Mules finished with double-digits in the scoring column, allowing the team to maintain their lead over Rosemont from the first basket until the clock hit zero. After a strong 2022-2023 season, one in which the Mules made it to the semi-final round of the Centennial Conference (CC) playoffs, the team is looking to build off of it and go even further this time around. Coming into the 2023-2024 season, the Mules were ranked fourth in the CC men’s

basketball preseason rankings, behind only Gettysburg College, Johns Hopkins University and the reigning CC champions, Swarthmore College. However, if they want to finish with a record of 18-9 like they did last season, the Mules are going to need big contributions from their underclassmen players. The team lost seven players, including six seniors who graduated, from last year’s squad. Besides the five upperclassmen who started in the team’s win over Rosemont, all of the other players that saw action were either sophomores, who saw 50 or fewer total minutes last season, or first-years in their first-ever collegiate basketball game.

“From what I’ve seen, the underclassmen have definitely been bringing a different type of energy to practice and even against Rosemont on Saturday,” said Brandon Goldberg ‘24. “With so many young guys, they bring this young energy where they’re all competing for minutes and pushing everyone in practice to go harder. I think their success in practice will translate right into the games with the level of competitiveness they play with.” Though the team knows that the first-years and sophomores are going to need to play a big role for them to have a successful season, they also know that the five who started the game versus Rosemont need to all play even better than they did last year.



PHOTO CREDIT TO MUHLENBERG’S ZENFOLIO.

Muhlenberg’s men’s basketball team huddles before a practice.

Goldberg commented, “All five of us (starters) have a lot of experience playing together because we did so much last year so we all know everyone’s strengths and weaknesses. I think we just need to teach the younger guys that it takes a group effort to win. Doing the little things are the things that win you games.” The Mules’ next game will be their home opener when they take on fellow Lehigh Valley rival, Moravian University. Despite this matchup being a

non-conference game, tensions always seem a little higher for this matchup compared to your average non-conference game. “This Moravian game is always a big game because we’re both located in the Lehigh Valley. They’re only a 15-minute drive away so it feels kind of personal, and you want to really win versus teams like them and DeSales. I’m expecting a big crowd and a good battle for the game on Wednesday,” said Goldberg. The Mules are looking to extend their win streak against the

Greyhounds to four wins as they haven’t lost to Moravian since 2018. Following their home opener versus Moravian, the team will then kick off in-conference play with four straight conference games, beginning with a matchup at Swarthmore on Wednesday, Nov. 22.

Volleyball finishes season in the first round of Centennial Conference playoffs

By Caiti Kinnear
Staff Writer

After an exciting season with many victories, much practice, hard work and even qualifying for the Centennial Conference playoffs, the 2023 Muhlenberg volleyball season has come to a strong close. Since starting their season in Fredericksburg, Va., against Marymount College in early September, the Mules have been training and playing hard, competing against extremely solid teams and totaling 14 wins for the season. In a competitive start to the season, Muhlenberg won their first game and kicked the year off right. One of the team’s captains, Rachel Jacobs ‘25, reflects on the game as a highlight of the season. “My favorite memory from this season was our overnight in Virginia. We played two really reputable teams and considering that they were our season openers, we showed up and played really well. All of us had so much fun playing together for the first time this season.” Shortly after their opening games, Muhlenberg volleyball

competed in the Buttermaker Tournament. The tournament was a great accomplishment for the team, who won three out of four of their games there. It brought on early success in the season and led the Mules to set themselves up for coming weeks of triumph. As the season progressed, the team continued to produce many wins and demonstrate all of the time they spent on the court preparing for the season. Over the summer, volleyball athletes arrived on campus earlier than most other students and earlier than in past seasons. It helped them to achieve a head start on their training which was evident once the season came forward. Beginning training early allowed the Mules to jump into the season right away and to spend time early focusing on communication, drills and scrimmages, as Jacobs describes. “We started with some individual skills drills but I think doing team scrimmages and drills so early really helped our communication. We had a really young team this season with five freshmen so starting

to scrimmage early helped them jump into the pace of college volleyball.” Muhlenberg also benefited from their ability to apply what they worked on in practice. Their ambition, positive attitude and attention to detail went a long way toward the success of the team. Captain Julia Ficon ‘24 explained, “This season we placed a huge emphasis on implementing what we practice into games. We were much more intentional in how we wanted practices to transfer into games this season. Having said that, we had a great group this year that came into the gym every day and wanted to work hard.” These aspects of the team’s process in games and practice were displayed clearly in their recent game against Dickinson. The team not only won this game regardless of their strong competitors, but they also qualified for the conference playoffs through this win, which Ficon noted that, “My favorite memory of the year would definitely be beating Dickinson at Dickinson as that game was essentially a playoff game and



PHOTO CREDIT TO MUHLENBERG’S ZENFOLIO.

Muhlenberg’s volleyball team faces Swarthmore.

allowed us to make our second playoff run in a row.” After the playoff game against Franklin & Marshall, Muhlenberg is looking forward to upcoming seasons and to see what is to come for the program in future years. The team hopes to continue to improve their communication, effort in practice and roster size in seasons to follow. “Next season, we are hoping to bring in another big freshmen class, and

having as many young players as we did this year, if not more, is really beneficial for developing the team for the years to come. The freshmen this year showed so much promise that next year, we should come back stronger. I am really looking forward to our spring season next semester to focus on individual skills and goals that we can apply in the fall,” Jacobs said, staying optimistic and ready for more successful seasons to come.

Muhlenberg lacrosse teams look toward the spring after rewarding fall off-seasons

@MUHLENBERGWLAX ON INSTAGRAM

By OLIVIA OBERMAN
SPORTS EDITOR

The Muhlenberg women's and men's lacrosse teams had very similar and successful 2023 spring seasons, dually clinching spots in the Centennial Conference (CC) playoffs and both earning 11-6 overall records. The men's team made program history, earning a playoff spot in back-to-back seasons for the first time, and the women's team set new standards after competing in the CC playoffs for the first time since 2017. Both teams recently wrapped up their fall ball seasons and are carrying their momentum forward in preparation for exciting spring competition.

On Sunday, Oct. 15, the Muhlenberg women's lacrosse team ended their fall ball season with a scrimmage against the 2023 Landmark Conference champions, Scranton University, who lost in the first round of the NCAA tournament last spring. Although the competitive matchup resulted in a 12-11 loss, the one-goal differential was indicative of natural team chemistry, some very exciting new talent, and a very competitive upcoming season.

Elisabeth Loiselle '24 elaborated, "Fall ball looked different for our team this year, with nine juniors being abroad in Florence and having graduated seven seniors. Given the number of veteran players who were absent and welcoming ten first-years to the roster, we really focused on developing our team chemistry and camaraderie on the field. This grew astronomically over our six weeks of fall ball. The small nature of our fall ball team allowed players from multiple grades to set up in their roles and really emerge as players. We all had to develop a deep sense of trust in each other very quickly to start playing as a team and achieve our goal of a successful fall scrimmage. Growing so much closer on the field ultimately translated to us having stronger relationships with each other off the field."

Hopeful that their camaraderie will continue to grow, Nicole Steiner '24 talked about the program's goals moving forward into 2024. "We had a very successful fall season bringing our freshmen into the program. Given all of our juniors are doing a current semester abroad, it allowed the younger players to get more practice time and experience on the field. It is a really exciting time for Muhlen-

berg women's lacrosse. Last year we made the Centennial Conference tournament for the first time in five years and lost a close game to Haverford. This year our goal is not just to make the tournament, but to win games and advance further."

The women's team is setting a new standard and is looking to make program history by advancing past the first round of conference playoffs this spring; if their current culture and outlook are any indication of their future success, the odds are very high they will do just that.

Loiselle noted, "With this season being my last and having now completed my final fall ball, you realize that the most important thing to walk away with is the bond you hold with your teammates and I am so grateful to be a part of an organization that emphasizes and embraces that. It puts us in a very strong position as we prepare for Feb. 1, so I am eager to see what's to come for women's lacrosse."

On Sunday, Oct. 22, the men's team traveled to Bridgewater, N.J., to participate in the Schambach Classic Tournament and to end their fall ball season on a high note. They competed against Montclair State University and Georgian Court University, winning both scrimmages. Similar to the women's team, the men's team was reliant on a strong development of team culture and hard work with almost their entire junior class studying abroad, and therefore absent on the fall roster.

Ryan May '24 summarized their off-season experience, "Our fall season went well. Al-

"...we really focused on developing our team chemistry and camaraderie on the field. This grew astronomically over our six weeks of fall ball. The small nature of our fall ball team allowed players from multiple grades to set up in their roles and really emerge as players."

though we were a young team having only one junior and nine seniors, the freshmen and sophomores stepped up and played a big role in winning both of our fall scrimmages. Our underclassmen got valuable game experience which will help them when we start spring play. We will only improve more after getting valuable players back from injury and our junior class back from studying abroad. In terms of the season, the goal remains the same as it is every year- to



The men's and women's lacrosse teams during the 2022-2023 season.

win the conference. Although we lost a big group of seniors last year, we feel that we have a lot of people who know what it takes to win and who understand the required work that goes into doing so."

With such a young roster this fall, their success speaks volumes. The entire team seems to have a similar mindset moving forward. When Matthew Regan '24 was asked about the program's goals for the spring, he replied, "The goal for the upcoming season is simple. It's to win the Centennial Championship."

Regan continued, "Despite falling short in recent years, it's our responsibility to learn from that and finish the job. The fall ball season proved to our team that we're serious contenders for winning it all this year. Alongside the return of key players who were abroad during fall, we're poised to enter springtime with a highly successful and competitive mindset."

The men's program is ready to make history and has been building its momentum for years now.

Both programs are more than prepared to kick start their 2024 spring seasons with strong momentum.

FANTASY FOOTBALL FIRST-TIMER



By ADDISON STAR
STAFF WRITER

Hours after I submitted my self-deprecating piece last week, I won. While I contemplated this ironic turn of events, my team went on, garnering me another win. Fate, it seems, is enjoying laughing at my expense, making me appear like a liar to all of you. What caused this dramatic turn of events? Was it the new quarterback I picked up, Dak Prescott, because Justin Fields had injured himself and Brock Purdy was on a bye week? Should I change my lineup or keep it the same? How do I know if I'm doing the right thing?

Obviously, I'm overjoyed that my team is doing well, but I'm left with more questions than answers, and I'm not sure what to do. Fantasy Football isn't an exact sci-

ence, so I know that some of this is just hoping that my guys do well, but there's got to be more to it, right?

In other news, I've decided that I will be a die-hard Eagles fan. As a native New Yorker, I understand that this is a dangerous decision to make, but I'm sticking to it. As for my reasons, they are as follows: as a Muhlenberg student, I now spend the majority of my time in Pa., where most people are Eagles fans- this is survival. I look FANTASTIC in dark green, which just so happens to be the Eagle's color. Finally, saying "Go Birds" is super fun and brings me great happiness. I have requested Eagles merch for the upcoming holiday season and expect to be fully decked in time for the Eagles to return to the Superbowl once again (let the record state that I did root for the Eagles last year). GO BIRDS!

Mules off to a jump-start

Women’s basketball starts the year with two victories.

By EVAN SCHLOTTERBECK
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

To open their 2023-2024 campaign, the Muhlenberg women’s basketball team started fast and with authority, taking down Moravian University and Hartwick College on Nov. 8 and Nov. 11, respectively. These games were both at home in the famous Memorial Hall, known to avid Muhlenberg basketball fans as ‘the Mecca of Centennial Conference basketball.’ This new journey for the team has just begun, but there are numerous positives for the Mules to be excited about as they push forward into the heart of this season.

When reflecting on the first two games, Forward Avery McNulty ‘26 said, “I think both games went really well for us. I can see how much we have improved from last year in everything we do. I think our defense has stepped up this year. We know what positions to be in most of the time, and our communication is much better. One thing we need to improve on is executing on offense and not letting up when we have a lead.”

Forward/Center Caroline Horst ‘24 had similar things to add. “I was happy with how we responded to close game situations. Even if we were not hitting our shots, we continued playing solid defense and rebounded well to keep us in the game; which we need to continue to do throughout the season,” said Horst.

The Mules outperformed both opponents in field goal percentage, blocks, steals and forced turnovers. This is a testament to their stingy and relentless defense, especially in forcing turnovers, as Moravian and Hartwick turned the ball over a combined 35 times, with the Mules only committing 18 turnovers, with nine coming in each game.

Something else the team has

done well is their off-court preparation, with Assistant Coach Sadie Nelson leading detailed film sessions before games where the players can gain an understanding of desired in-game strategy and tactics for each matchup. “I think we executed well against both of these teams,” commented McNulty. “Our scouting from our new assistant Sadie has been tremendous with letting us know what we have to do. We had some players that we needed to do specific things for. For example, with Moravian, we needed to keep their post player off the offensive and defensive boards and not let her get any easy looks at the basket, and our defenders did just that.”

Since basketball teams in the Centennial Conference need to play each other twice, once at home and once on the road, throughout a traditional regular season, the Mules are only a few games away from opening their conference schedule. They will travel to Swarthmore on Tuesday, Nov. 21, so these games are also acting as a test run for the team to sharpen the iron before then. “Something we want to work on for Swarthmore is our transition offense,” explained Point Guard Ava Connolly ‘25. “It’s something we have been working on in practice but have trouble executing in games. If we can add that component to our game, it can give us a few extra points which may help us in close games.”

When asked about their Swarthmore matchup, McNulty added, “I think some things we need to sharpen up before Swarthmore is our ball pressure and help defense in the post. They have one of the best post players in the conference returning, and I think more pressure on the ball will make the passes tougher for her. Also, more help in the post could help us out with limiting her points in the paint.”

The team is returning most of its players from last year and only added two first-years with their newest recruiting class, meaning team cohesion is already close to surpassing a very high threshold from last year. Especially in the collegiate game, where it is typical to have high rates of roster circulation, such a large amount



Muhlenberg’s women’s basketball plays Moravian.

of returners is a rare, beneficial foundation of success for this Mules team. “Our team chemistry is strong,” relayed Connolly. “With only one senior leaving last year and only two incoming freshmen, we have a lot of experienced returners. We are definitely a very close-knit group and I can definitely tell there is more of a chemistry on the court

this season after last year’s season.

McNulty echoed a similar message, “We are together 24/7, which really translates to the court. This has definitely helped us with being more connected and having a groove when we are playing.”

The Mules will look to continue their hot start to the season


when they travel up to Westfield, Massachusetts, to participate in the Westfield Gas and Electric Tip-Off Tournament. They will open the event against Eastern Connecticut State on Friday, Nov. 17, at 7:30 p.m.

Coming up this week in

SPORTS

Nov. 16 - Nov. 22

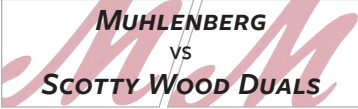
Football



MUHENBERG
vs
LEBANON VALLEY

Sat, Nov. 18 @ 12:00 p.m.
Scotty Wood Stadium


Wrestling



MUHENBERG
vs
SCOTTY WOOD DUALS

Sat, Nov. 18 @ 12:00 p.m.
Deitrich Field House


Women’s Basketball



MUHENBERG
vs
SWARTHMORE

Tues, Nov. 21 @ 6:00 p.m.
Swarthmore, Pa.

Men’s Basketball



MUHENBERG
vs
SWARTHMORE

Tues, Nov. 21 @ 8:00 p.m.
Swarthmore, Pa.

“Reset: New Dances” debuts on ‘Berg stage

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PHOTO BY MADDIE CILIENTO '25



The mystery of Martin Luther Hall

Martin Luther (ML) Hall survives its first semester without Muhlenberg students.

By SAMANTHA TEMPKIN
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

An email sent out in the spring semester of 2023 sent waves through the Muhlenberg community as major changes to the housing system were announced to be implemented in the upcoming semester. These changes included the gender integration of Brown Hall, requiring all students (except commuters) to live on campus and the closing of Martin Luther (ML) Hall to the Muhlenberg community. ML specifically remains a mystery to many on campus as the building is completely separated from the Muhlenberg community. Students have been hypothesizing throughout the semester about what exactly is going on inside ML, such as Emma Schatzberg '25 who stated, “I heard that people are living there right now on the top floor, and people have seen people go in with animals and pets...I don’t know if anything is finalized now or if anything

is going to happen.” Now that the first semester in which these changes were enforced is coming to an end, the Housing & Residence Life (HRL) department reveals how the proposed changes announced in February manifested themselves into real change, and students reflect on the outcome of these decisions on their current living situations.

Now that ML is utilized by outside entities other than Muhlenberg, Executive Director of College Life Operations Jane Schubert oversees the maintenance and operation of the building. Schubert and HRL responded together to a series of questions that clarify the details of ML’s current operation. They confirmed the idea stated in February that residents in ML consist of non-students. The building has been opened for local corporations and hospitals to house those in their internships, fellowships and residency assignment programs. One organization that houses its volunteers in ML is AmeriCorps, a government service agency that often visits the Lehigh Valley.

The wording in the response received from Schubert and HRL indicates which of these changes are expected to remain and which may be reconsidered in the future: “This temporary change for ML to be offline for students was made with the

knowledge that there was ample housing on campus for the currently enrolled students. The permanent shift to Brown being an all gender building provides a more equitable balance of triples and singles across all genders.”

Schubert and HRL even confirmed that ML is likely to house Muhlenberg students once again with the projection of increased enrollment over the next three years. However, their response included a reiteration of the College’s reasoning for why these changes were an integral decision for Muhlenberg right now: “It also allows for students to select roommates of all genders throughout all housing. It allowed a higher percentage of first-year students to be housed in double rooms instead of triple rooms, which has benefitted students who are adjusting to living with a roommate for the first time. It does mean that it is likely there will be more sophomores in triple rooms for the next few years, but the triples in Brown Hall and East Hall are larger than many of the triples in Martin Luther, and sophomores can go into lottery planning for the possibility of a triple room in a way that is more difficult for first-year students.”

The administrators in HRL made these changes to the housing system to help first-year students adjust to the college experience and to make the

housing system more equitable in terms of gender distribution. HRL also acknowledges that sophomores tend to get the short end of the stick with this system but rectifies this with the assertion that triples in Brown and East are spacious and sophomores have a better chance of acquiring them. This can remain a difficult situation if a student only has one roommate, meaning that they would receive a random roommate who they do not know and may not align with their living styles.

Many sophomores have expressed frustration with how the changes in housing have affected their class year in terms of living situations. Jade Gambino '26 said, “I felt like the closing of ML left very little room for students to live comfortably. Luckily for me, my current roommate had a low number, but if I were to have lived with my original roommate where my number was decent, I would have been stuck in a Benfer with a bunch of people I wouldn’t have known. ML was not favorable for students, but it was still a livable place for students and now it just remains empty and a waste of space. Students are anxious about housing because they could be stuck in an uncomfortable situation for the school to pay less money for housing. Also, the [change] of Brown was devastating because I personally planned to live in

Brown again...I felt safest and most comfortable in a single sex environment, and I know others did as well. Brown being single sex was important for students to feel safe. I felt like the school only cared about costs instead of students. I currently don’t really like East that much because I don’t feel safe in a co-ed dorm environment.”

Another anonymous sophomore expressed similar ideas with the sentiment, “basically Brown used to feel more comfortable because it was a space for those who don’t identify as male, but now that it’s co-ed, the environment isn’t the same. That’s not to say residents have done anything intentionally, but it’s a shame that non-male identifying individuals don’t have a housing option anymore that makes them feel safer for whatever reason.”

The initial reactions of anger and disappointment expressed by students when these changes were first announced have simmered down throughout the semester. For this reason, HRL mentioned that they have not received concerns from the campus community at large relating to the closing of ML. They ensured that various benefits have resulted from these changes, including feelings of community in residential

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Arts & Culture
New exhibit at Martin Art Gallery
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Campus Voices
Lily Magoon '23 says good-bye to ‘Berg.
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Sports
Women’s wrestling gears up for fall 2024 start.
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THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY

Serving the Muhlenberg College Community since 1883

CORRECTION POLICY

The Muhlenberg Weekly strives for accuracy in reporting and writing, but we acknowledge that mistakes happen. Readers are invited to submit corrections about errors in articles, and they should be submitted to weeklyeditor@gmail.com. Corrections are also brought to our staff’s attention by our own editors and writers. Our staff will review the suggested correction, consult with the author of the article, and issue the appropriate correction. Online corrections are located at the bottom of the article. Print corrections are located within the paper, on the page indicated in the online edition. However, The Weekly does not grant take-down requests for articles.

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CAMPUS SAFETY NOTES

11/21
Medical—Report of injured employee in Seegers Union, MC EMS responded, individual transported to hospital by family member.

Alcohol Violation—Report of alcohol violation in East Hall, alcohol found in room, items brought to Campus Safety and placed in evidence locker, investigation to continue.

Fire safety violation—Report of fire safety violation on N22nd Street, covered smoke detector, cover removed.

Fire safety violation—Report of fire safety violation in Benfer, covered smoke detector, cover removed.

Alcohol Violation—Report of alcohol violation in Benfer Hall, alcohol found in room, alcohol disposed of by Campus Safety Officer.

Alcohol Violation—Report of alcohol violation in

Benfer Hall, alcohol found in room, alcohol disposed of by Campus Safety Officer.

Alcohol Violation—Report of alcohol violation in Benfer Hall, alcohol found in room, alcohol disposed of by Campus Safety Officer.

Fire safety violation—Report of fire safety violation in Benfer Hall, covered smoke detector, cover removed.

Fire safety violation—Report of fire safety violation in Walz Hall, covered smoke detector, cover removed.

11/27
Medical—Report of sick student in the Village, MC EMS responded, Allentown EMS responded and transported student to hospital.

SGA shares plans for next semester

By MATTHEW KLINGER
NEWS EDITOR

It should be noted that the author of this piece, Matthew Klinger ‘24, is a representative for the Student Government Association.

After a busy semester, Muhlenberg’s Student Government Association (SGA) held its last meeting yesterday. Despite there being controversy during the semester, SGA continued their work and planned for the future. The fall semester saw 12 new clubs approved, ranging from fandom clubs, to affinity groups, to art clubs. SGA also held a number of different events. At the beginning of the year, SGA held the first ever Muhlenbonfire. It also held the Udder Bar Challenge, where a new record time of just over five minutes was set. Towards the end of the semester, the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (DEI&B) committee held its annual “Tens Across The Board” event with an added fashion show before the event that celebrated the work of Black fashion designers from New York City. The DEI&B committee also held a diversity dinner at the end of the semester to support students on campus. Unlike past years where only students were invited, faculty and staff were also invited to help connect students with a greater support net-

work.

In addition to engaging with the student body, SGA also created and passed a number of by-laws in an effort to improve how SGA is run. One of the most significant ones came in the wake of the Israel-Palestine conflict. The original statement put out by SGA addressing the conflict made many students feel excluded and hurt. A new bylaw was created to prevent that from happening in the future. Going forward, statements responding to a crisis will strictly be statements of support, with the goal of informing students of the different resources available to them on campus. Those resources include students attending SGA General Assembly meetings to speak as constituents. In addition to being statements of support, crisis-response statements are meant to remain neutral whenever possible to ensure that SGA is supporting students rather than dividing or excluding them.

Members of the student body were also given a greater voice through an Ad-Hoc bylaw. Before the new bylaw, there could not be co-chairs on Ad-Hoc committees, and the chairs had to be members of SGA. The new bylaw changes this as Ad-Hoc committees are now allowed to have co-chairs, and one of those co-chairs does not have to be a member of SGA. The hope is that this new bylaw will give students the op-

portunity and resources to work for positive change on campus. For example, one of the existing Ad-Hoc committees aimed at supporting commuter students opened a commuter lounge in the basement of Taylor Hall to better serve commuting students on campus. The new bylaw will allow students to implement such changes even if they are not serving on SGA.

SGA also used its funds to financially support a number of clubs on campus. One of the highlights of the semester was approving funding for Muhlapalooza, which is an all-day music festival happening on campus in April. It will showcase student artists, as well as several other up-and-coming bands. In addition to Muhlapalooza, SGA also provided The Perkulators, ‘Berg’s jazz dance team with new uniforms that will help foster an inclusive and body-positive environment for the club and campus as a whole.

SGA hopes to continue the progress they made this semester during the spring semester. They have a number of plans, ranging from new bylaws to events on campus to increased support for all students. One of the first things SGA will do next semester is elect additional representatives. While Josephine Glass ‘27, Shajnin Howlader ‘27 and Ben Allen ‘25 were elected during the fall special election in late November, another spe-

cial election will be held at the beginning of next semester to fill the additional remaining vacancies.

SGA is also hoping to create a new bylaw that will increase first-year representation. During the fall semester, there were no first-years serving on SGA, and SGA wants to change that. The proposed bylaw change would reserve two seats for first-years either at the beginning of the fall or spring semester. Those seats would then be filled by a special election. The hope is that doing so will allow all students on campus to have representation in SGA.

Another proposed change will reduce student learning barriers by making textbooks more accessible. Student Body President Jake Forstein ‘24 and Howlader have proposed a textbook exchange program, which would allow students to exchange textbooks for classes rather than having to buy new ones every semester. This program would allow students to focus on get-

ting all the materials they need to learn, rather than being pre-occupied with the cost of getting those materials.

Shobha Pai ‘24 likes the idea of a textbook exchange program, stating that “As I have progressed through my time at Muhlenberg, my textbooks have been getting expensive, especially with Spanish classes where you have to get a link too. So, I really like that SGA is trying to do this, and I think that it is going to help a lot of students who cannot afford them and need to apply for loans. My only concern is about the codes in textbooks that some professors need for quizzes. As an LA, I go through this since a lot of my intro Psychology classes needed a code, so how that would work with a textbook exchange program is my only concern.”

Students who want to have their voices heard by SGA are encouraged to come to SGA General Assembly meetings held on Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SGA

Muhlenberg hires new dean of global education

PHOTO COURTESY OF MUHLENBERG.EDU

By SAMANTHA BROOKS
STAFF WRITER

Muhlenberg has just hired a new dean of global education, Marcia Morgan, Ph.D. In addition to being the incoming dean of global education, Morgan is also a professor of philosophy at the College. Morgan earned a B.S. in Accounting from the School of Business at Villanova University in 1992 and a Ph.D. in Philosophy from the New School of Social Research in 2003. She joined the faculty at Muhlenberg College in the Department of Philosophy in 2009. While a full-time professor of Philosophy, Morgan is also an Affiliate Faculty Member in Jewish Studies, Sustainability Studies and Women’s and Gender Studies. She has taught courses that are cross-listed with Neuroscience and Theatre as well.

Morgan explains that she chose this position because of her study abroad experience as a high school and graduate student, a doctoral and postdoctoral researcher, a faculty member and a parent. She hopes to contribute to the growth and sustenance of Muhlenberg College’s global education. She says, “I studied and lived abroad internationally for a total of eight years, and traveled internationally on an intensive research and guest lecture/speaker schedule since then.

International travel has been a foundation of my research since 1998 through participation in university curricular programs, conferences and direct work with professors in many venues abroad, including in the Middle East and all of Europe.”

As a Ph.D. candidate in the US, Morgan received the DAAD/Fulbright annual fellowship for completion of her doctoral degree in Germany. She completed post-doctoral research at the Technical University of Dresden in Germany and also served as a Lecturer at Potsdam University in Germany.

Studying abroad offers a tremendous opportunity for students to enhance their readiness for future difficulties in an increasingly interconnected world. Studying abroad at reputable universities in Europe, Australia, Asia, Latin America and Africa is encouraged for Muhlenberg College students majoring in any of the social sciences, arts and humanities. Through involvement in off-campus activities both domestically and abroad, the Office of Global Education aims to offer academic opportunities for students and faculty members to build global awareness and exposure to other traditions and perspectives.

At Muhlenberg, Morgan has served on the Fulbright Faculty Committee for several years, on the Prestigious

Awards Committee and on the President’s Awards Faculty Committee. Morgan is responsible for overseeing a majority of the global education office’s operations. This includes communicating with members of the Muhlenberg community and keeping them up to date with developments in their programs. Other responsibilities include accommodations, budgeting and coordination of student involvement in study abroad programs.

In her new position, Morgan says, “My hopes and plans for the new position are to bring stability and longevity to the global education program at the College; and to help further develop global education on our campus so that it flourishes not only through study abroad, but also through generative and nuanced integration of transnational learning in Muhlenberg’s curricular and co-curricular programs. [I am] very excited to begin this new position, and to learn and grow with the students, faculty and staff who engage in different ways with global education at Muhlenberg.”

Matthew Baresh ‘25, who is studying abroad in the Spring 2024 semester, says, “I’m so relieved that we have a new dean of global education. I’m studying abroad next semester in France and the recent commotion at the office of global education



Headshot of of Marcia Morgan, Ph.D.

was starting to make me nervous. I planned on studying abroad since I was a freshman and would’ve hated to see that opportunity taken away. I’m so glad that Dean Morgan was hired and hope that she eases the stresses of other students as well.”

Samantha Winegard ‘24 is also glad that there is a new director, stating “I went abroad to Stockholm Sweden to DIS, and it took me almost a year to get my transcript put on my transcript here, and so I think having a new director will get the process moving along faster, especially for getting GARs [fulfilled] and

graduating on time.”

“The hiring of a new dean was definitely reassuring in knowing that not only there is a dean but that she also has experience with global education at Muhlenberg so I trust her,” shared Lena Bromberg ‘25. “Overall I am glad that the position is filled by someone knowledgeable about the school and our abroad program.”

Lena Bromberg ‘25 was previously unaware of the new hire, stating “honestly I am shocked because that is so important to know since that’s who I’ll be working with.”

Office of Information Technology walks a budget tightrope

By MATTHEW BARESH
NEWS EDITOR

On Nov. 7, student employees at the Office of Information Technology (OIT) were shocked to receive an email regarding a recent budget cut. After budget constraints, the department was required to limit student workers’ hours to 22 per month, resulting in approximately five hours of work per week. In addition to the cut hours, students’ work schedules have also been changed to reflect the budget cut. While their hourly pay rate remains the same, students acknowledged the drastic effect this budget cut would have on their foreseeable paychecks.

In the email, OIT Client Support Specialist Amaury Duran also explained that “This will take effect immediately as we have to try to get ahead of a budget shortfall. Forgive me for this sudden and unfortunate news as I am just learning of this and sharing the news quickly... In addition to the budget change for the foreseeable future, hours that become available by students, who miss work, will not be allowed to be picked up by others. Also, during holiday breaks, no hours/shifts will

be available as we’re trying to keep within budget hours. I will let everyone know if anything changes in the future. I appreciate your patience during this time of change.”

Student workers in the OIT, also known as “Helpdesk Associates,” are trained to assist with technology troubleshooting and setup for faculty, students and staff. Their typical work consists of helping those who come in person to the office with concerns regarding their devices. They also answer phone calls and provide support, transferring the call to other professionals in the office when needed.

The student employees are grateful for the opportunities given to them through the OIT, however, some are disappointed by this recent budget cut.

Britney Bonhomme ‘24, a current student worker for OIT shared “I am stunned and disappointed. I would’ve never seen this coming and I do well at my job like everyone else. They changed everyone’s schedules, so people now have to work around their new hours. Luckily my hours were not cut by too much, but I know someone else who works at OIT and their hours were cut by over 50 percent which is crazy. I can’t



The entrance of the Office of Technology Information.

PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR MADDIE CILIENTO ‘25.

imagine losing that many hours of work under such short notice”

Nadia Maurice ‘25, another student worker for OIT said “There is a limited budget for the OIT Office and Media Services. Unfortunately, the budget cuts forced our department to cut back on hours and possibly employees, as well as take away the option for picking up extra

shifts. It’s sad that this happened right before the holidays but I understand it is out of our control.”

“I don’t work as much as other people since I have other jobs but it’s definitely not ideal,” shared Steven Belloise ‘25. “I feel bad for people who have this job as their main source of income but I don’t think it’s anyone’s

fault.”

The cut in work hours and other policies regarding covering shifts is expected to continue into the spring semester of 2024, leaving student workers disappointed yet understanding of why their hours were cut in the first place.

FROM **MARTIN** PAGE 1
spaces resulting from the decrease in fullness of each hall. This has led to more attendance at floor and building programs “because students are not as spread out across the residential environments.”

The HRL department is also cognizant of the idea that sophomores are at a disadvantage with the current system. They said, “Sophomores who had to select triples in Brown or spaces in Benfer were understandably disappointed during the housing lottery. As we always do, we encouraged students to complete the waitlist form. Every student who was on the waitlist to leave Benfer was offered at least one other housing

option from the waitlist. Some chose those options and some remained in Benfer. Some, but not all, students in triples were offered doubles on the waitlist. This was a common occurrence when Martin Luther was available as well, because there are a mix of doubles and triples in that building too. Interest in triples varies from year to year throughout housing.”

With the projection of increased enrollment within the next three years, it is possible that ML will once again be open for the use of Muhlenberg students. For the meantime, the building will remain something of a liminal place for Muhlenberg students as they reflect on their experiences with and without the building.



PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR MADDIE CILIENTO '25.

Martin Luther Hall pictured above.

To protest, or not to protest: that is the question

The Weekly does a deep dive on the history of a protest policy on Muhlenberg’s campus.

By KEANNA PEÑA
MANAGING EDITOR

On college campuses across the country, there has been an uptick in protests and demonstrations. On Nov. 8, twenty students from Brown University were arrested and charged with willful trespass after hosting a sit-in at University Hall, demanding that their University’s president, Christina Paxson, “commit to supporting a divestment of the University’s endowment from ‘companies that enable war crimes in Gaza,’” explained The Brown Daily Herald. And while those charges have since been dropped, it begs college students to wonder how much their con-

stitutional right to free speech is protected at private institutions. The Weekly decided to take a look at Muhlenberg’s own protest policy, formally known as the Student Demonstration Policy, which addresses the extent of students’ right to dissent on Muhlenberg’s campus.

After years of drafts, this policy was recently updated in Aug. 2022. Dean of Students Allison Williams shared, “The College has had a policy for dissent on campus for many years similar to all other institutions across the country. This policy was revised in 2018-2019 to 1) change the tone of the policy to be more affirmative of student’s right to dissent on campus (it used to be called the Protest policy), 2) to be more explicit so that student groups would have a better sense of what would be “allowed” or “not allowed” and 3) to make sure it fully aligned with the College’s code of conduct and freedom of expression policy.” The Weekly was unable to locate the text of the original policy to determine the revisions.

For those who haven’t read

it, here are a few highlights of Muhlenberg’s current protest policy. Students cannot: “Interfere with the activities of others on campus; Interfere with College business or activities; Disrupt scheduled College ceremonies or College-sponsored or approved events; Cause a safety issue for others in the immediate vicinity or; Impede traffic or block traffic flow on campus or between campus locations.”

Assuming that students abide by these rules, they will be protected by the College. However, the policy does not specify what constitutes a safety issue or what would be considered interfering with a campus activity. If this policy is violated, there is a list of ways the College will respond to the protest, which could include getting campus safety involved or the Allentown Police.

After conducting an informal survey of 100 Muhlenberg students, 96% did not know of the existence of this policy. This is surprising as the older drafts of this policy actually incited protests of their own.

In 2015, former President

Randy Helm drafted a student demonstration policy in the “wake of recent campus demonstrations,” as stated in his “Discussion Draft of Protest and Demonstration Policy.” Helm is referring to a sit-in that took place in Seegers Union where students protested Police Officer Daniel Pantello’s exoneration of the death of Eric Garner. When this draft emerged, students and faculty alike were outraged.

Several petitions circulated on Muhlenberg’s campus. One petition created by the students stated, “This draft by common consensus was found to be vague, restrictive to constitutional rights, and developed through a problematic policy process.” A student in the Apr. 30, 2015 edition of The Muhlenberg Weekly said, “I don’t believe this policy is in any way conducive to the articulation of free speech.” Due to these protests, Helm pushed the drafting of the policy onto the incoming President John Williams who did not pursue its implementation.

According to Dean Williams, the current protest policy is “de-

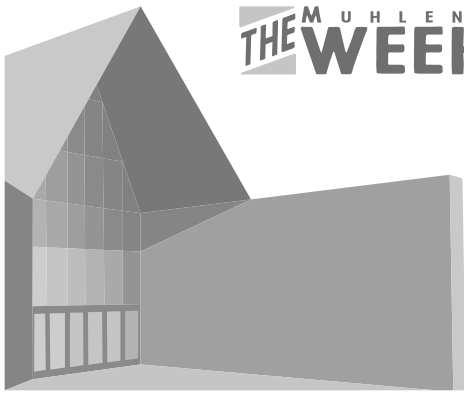
signed to keep our students, faculty and staff safe, and to make it clear that the right to express dissenting views and engage in freedom of expression demonstrations is critical at Muhlenberg. The policy mirrors our student conduct process with violations only occurring when there is harm to self, others, property or to the community as a whole. It also sets forth boundaries on how, when and where demonstrations can occur to allow for the business of the College to be able to continue and for the demonstration to happen without being interfered with or shut down.”

Some examples of protests possible on Muhlenberg’s campus include: “Standing silently while holding signs at a College-sponsored lecture that is open to the campus (while still allowing the lecture to continue without disruption); Organizing a walk-out from class or a sit-in in a public space on campus (while still allowing access to College functions for others); and Holding a march across campus or reserving a space for a speak-out to occur.”

Since this revision in August of 2022, there have not been any campus protests and so it remains to be seen how this policy will impact future protests here at Muhlenberg.



Students protest outside of the Life Sports Center in 2019. Photo courtesy of Ashleigh Stange.

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/ARTS & CULTURE

“Creativity takes courage”

- Henri Matisse

Independent film “Right Behind You”

By KEANNA PEÑA
MANAGING EDITOR

“Right Behind You” is a student film written and directed by Sophie Stein ‘25 and co-produced with Raymond Ceres ‘25, director of cinematography. Set in a small town in the ‘80s, “Right Behind You” follows the story of Eli, a Jewish high school senior on the track team, and Tom, a fellow track athlete whose competitiveness is heavily intertwined with his antisemitic beliefs. The film follows their two stories as the tension between them peaks.

The script originated from Visiting Assistant Professor of Theatre & English Gabriel Dean’s Intro to Screenwriting class, a course Stein took in her first year at Muhlenberg. “The inspiration for this film was a bit of a mix between stories my dad would tell me about growing up in the ‘80s as the Rabbi’s son, and my own experiences and emotions as a Jewish teenager... resulting in a script about a teenager’s struggle with antisemitism, and the helplessness of not knowing how to handle it,” said Stein.

This past summer, Stein and Ceres were writing a short comedy when the script for “Right Behind You” came up. Stein explained, “[Ceres] asked me if I would ever consider shooting it, and from there we began playing with the idea of this project, leaving the comedy for another time. ‘Right Behind You’ just seemed like a more promising script as it was.”

“I was attracted to this project because of all the challenges it would entail, on both a producing and cinematography level. To make a project at this scale, there were huge obstacles for us to tackle, as we started from a place of no actors, no funding and no location permissions,” said Ceres. “There was so much uncertainty hanging over us as we prepared to post our casting calls and launch our GoFundMe campaign.”

A notable aspect of the student film is that aside from Dan Harel ‘26, who plays Eli, the majority of the actors in the film are not affiliated with Muhlenberg College. In early August, Ceres and Stein began posting casting calls on websites such as Backstage and Actors Access. This was due to a majority of the cast consisting of adult male actors.

“Personally, I wasn’t anticipating much success, but we ended up getting over 300



Sophie Stein ‘25 and Raymond Ceres ‘25 work on their self-produced film, “Right Behind You.”

PHOTO COURTESY OF BELLA FISHER

submissions. From there, we asked actors for self-tapes and then moved to callbacks on Zoom. We spent multiple days on Zoom with different actors, reading sides with them and talking in-depth about the characters. It meant a lot to me that people believed in the project and wanted to be a part of it. After callbacks, it was clear almost immediately who was right for the roles, and we met with all of our actors again before officially casting them. It was then that the project actually started feeling real,” said Stein.

Anthony Mark Mancini, who plays Coach said, “I responded to a casting notice on Backstage.com followed by a self-tape audition. I was an actor in the ‘80s and ‘90s [and] then I took a lifetime hiatus to do other things. I have recently returned to the acting world and [working with Ceres and Stein] was wonderful. Recently I have been working with a lot of young filmmakers and it’s been a joy to be around their youthful energy.”

Siddy Goldstein, who plays Tom, is a sophomore from New York University who commuted to Allentown on the weekends that were scheduled for filming. “It was a very fun experience working with fellow students Raymond and Sophie. Even though this was a student film, leading up to filming, the preparation period felt very professional.”

Goldstein reflected, “One favorite moment during filming was when we were filming the Tom bedroom scenes. You get to see a small section of Tom’s home life and the set was just amazing. It seemed like everything you could find from the ‘80s had been plastered all over the wall.”

As this was a period piece,

everything from the costumes to the set design had to be reminiscent of the 80s. “Since this is a period piece, set in a small rural town, we had to account for a lot. We couldn’t use any modern-looking outfits, so virtually every single article of clothing in the film was purchased by us. There were many trips made to the thrift store and huge purchases from Amazon and other random websites. I also borrowed quite a few items from my dad’s old wardrobe, which proved extremely helpful because we got to incorporate a bunch of authentic ‘80s pieces,” said Stein.

Ceres added, “Once we committed to not compromising on accuracy, we have been paying attention to the smallest details—from the Coach’s stopwatch to one of the characters’ alarm clocks.”

Through a GoFundMe page created to help with production costs, Stein and Ceres raised about \$3,500 only after about a month of fundraising.

When they arrived on campus, they began working on the project immediately. Since the majority of the film takes place outside and is focused on track athletes, Ceres explained that “As soon as we got back to campus we immediately underwent test shoots, mainly to determine the best methods for camera stabilization. The trial and error of these test shoots allowed us to decide on a visual look for the film and establish rules for movements and compositions that would violate or accomplish our vision.”

As for filming outside, Stein added, “Turns out shooting a primarily exterior film is quite the feat. Working around the weather is incredibly

unpredictable, especially when it decided to rain nearly every weekend for the past two months.”

“When shooting exteriors, you have far less visual control so it is important to plan shoots based on weather, cloud coverage and time of day, especially since some scenes demand certain conditions to achieve a desired mood or demand conditions that will be consistent with footage shot on a different day,” said Ceres. “Scheduling is always difficult, but it is even more difficult with how unpredictable these factors are, and even more complicated since we have had to coordinate shoots based on the availability of locations as well as the availability of actors coming in.”

In addition to filming in Muhlenberg’s facilities, the women’s locker room and Everson House, the majority of filming took place on Lafayette’s track and field. They rented an Airbnb for filming as well.

This is Stein’s first time directing a film of this scale, and she reflected that “Directing is rather bizarre at times because it is unlike any other dynamic I have experienced in real life. You suddenly have all of the authority over a project that everyone has their own thoughts and opinions on.”

To help navigate the role of director, Stein dove into research. “There was a lot to learn—from respectfully talking to actors, to giving strong notes, to leading productive rehearsals. I reached out to a handful of actors at Muhlenberg and listened to the way they spoke about their own acting process and what they found most meaningful in their experience with directors.”

Thomas Wechsler, who plays

Iz, shared that “I love working with student filmmakers [because] they are passionate about the work [they do]. Raymond and Sophie are great to work with, professional and extremely dedicated to the project and the craft. They work hard to make sure every scene is exactly right, and that makes the actors comfortable with their performance. I have the utmost respect for them and the rest of the actors and crew.”

As for balancing the film and being full-time students, Stein explained, “It’s a lot of go, go, go and getting school work done during any spare time you have. We quickly became accustomed to getting very little sleep and not thinking about much else besides the project. At times it felt like we were just going to our classes and grabbing dinner in between working on the film. It consumes you in a way that probably appears concerning to the onlookers of your life.”

“It [was] overwhelming at times, especially without the support of a class or professor dedicated to the creation of the film,” said Stein. “No one was there to tell us the challenges of shooting exterior, or of stabilizing a camera while tracking two actors running and talking at the same time, or of coordinating a shoot with 15-plus people. Everyone I reached out to at Muhlenberg was a huge help and I am immensely grateful for all of the knowledge they gave me, but in the end, this project was created independently and we had to figure out a lot by ourselves.”

“[Stein] and I have basically been working on this project every day since June and have really been pushing ourselves. We just wrapped and there’s still a long way to go with post-production and entering the festival circuit. I really hope that when the final product is released it is clear all the hard work and passion that the cast and crew has poured into it,” reflected Ceres.

Stein stated, “I guess you never really know while you’re making something how it is going to turn out or if it will be successful in the end, but there is definitely a feeling that this is something really special. At the very least, I know this film will be meaningful to the people who worked on it, and to me, that makes everything worth it.”

Stein and Ceres plan to submit to film festivals in fall 2024.

MTA Studios

By EMMA HOWSON
STAFF WRITER

The weekend of Nov. 30, the Muhlenberg Theatre Association (MTA) put on their semesterly Studios Festival. Every single element of the festival was made possible by the work of students. The directing, designing, acting, stage managing, etc. were completely student-driven. One of the plays this semester was even student-written.

Let’s start there: “Nowhere Left to Go,” written by Katie Harris ‘24 and directed by Shira Holtz ‘24, told the story of six strangers who all mysteriously end up trapped in a cave. Over the course of the play, their pasts begin to slowly unravel as they try to find a way out. The play made excellent use of the lighting (or lack thereof), mimicking the characters’ sense of directionlessness. It was often just as engaging to watch the characters in the dark as it was to watch the ones who were lit.

The other straight play, albeit with some dancing, was an adaptation of Shakespeare’s “Twelfth Night (Or What You Will).” Conceived in collaboration with the director Becca Millevoi ‘24 and the cast, this adaptation was a queer retelling of the play,

intermingling Shakespeare’s iambic pentameter and modern speech.

Alex Piteris ‘27 really enjoyed the production. “I liked how accessible the adapted script was to audience members who are not familiar with Shakespearean text. Sometimes people become frustrated with trying to follow the plot of his plays and the narration of the hilarious players helped lessen that confusion... I’m glad it was performed. There is a lot of value in inviting Shakespearean texts into a modern context. The queer element was very well incorporated into the show and really explored those lines of Shakespeare’s text that made us all raise an eyebrow. Historians might say they were best friends, but we can beg to differ.”

Piteris was also impressed with other production elements, going on to say, “I really enjoyed the execution of the shipwreck in the beginning. The lights and movement gave a sense of urgency that transferred to the audience. It really set the tone of the production and had me at the edge of my seat for what came next.”

The other two shows in the festival were musicals. The first one was “Fun Home,” directed by Bri Ramberg ‘24 and music



The casts of “35mm,” “Nowhere Left To Go,” “Fun Home,” and “Twelfth Night.” Photo courtesy of Carolina Sutton-Schott ‘24.

directed by Bethany Qian ‘25 and Sonny Berenson ‘26. The show is an adaptation of Alison Bechdel’s graphic memoir of the same name. It tells the story of Alison at three stages of her life: as a child, a college student and a middle-aged adult looking back on her journey. It was the longest and definitely most emotional show in the festival; I know myself and others were brought to tears watching Alison discover her identity as a lesbian in a fraught household.

Katy Olson ‘27, who played Small Alison, said, “I think for me, being involved in ‘Fun

Home’ was a really great way to get to know some of the theater community on campus and to meet other people with similar interests. I also met people who worked in all aspects of theater and that was really neat getting to see how the lighting works, how the set works. And also, the intimacy coordinator! I’ve never been in a show that had that before, so that was a really unique part of this process.”

Finally, there was “35mm,” directed by Tommy Kelly ‘24 and music directed by Jay Walker ‘25. The show was completely sung-through and consisted of

a series of vignettes based on 16 photos taken by the composer’s husband on 35mm film. Walker was very glad to have been a part of the Studios Festival. They told me, “From what I saw, everyone was just so talented. Every single facet of the creative process was awesome. I could not be more thankful to my creative team for giving me the chance to work on a production as big as ‘35mm.’ I hope everyone walks away from Studios feeling so proud of themselves because this was some of the best theatre I’ve seen come out of this school.”

New exhibit at Martin Art Gallery

By SHAIYAN FEISAL
ASSISTANT A&C EDITOR

The art exhibition “Welcome to the Neighborhood” by &drew Soria (Andrew Soria) opened on Nov. 27 at the Martin Art Gallery and will be viewable until Jan. 5. The exhibit features large scale prints of Soria’s digital collages of various cities or specific neighborhoods through a pop surrealism cityscape lens.

Soria is a photographer and digital pop surrealist based in Los Angeles, Calif. His work highlights the vibrant culture, uncommon and colorful architecture of different cities and neighborhoods he travels to. His goal is to be able to capture the ambiance of the city.

Pop surrealism cityscape, according to Soria’s website, consists of combining original photographs that Soria has taken and blending the photographs into a digital collage using Adobe Photoshop. Each collage Soria makes is unique and is able to convey the diversity and the distinctive characteristics of each city or neighborhood he wants to showcase. Soria’s exhibit currently held at Muhlenberg is able to transport those who have visited cities such as New York or Miami Beach into the past as Soria is able to evoke a sense of nostalgia in his works.

The virtual artist talk and open reception was held on Nov. 29. During the talk, Soria walked through the basics of Photoshop



‘Mementos of Los Angeles’ by featured artist Andrew Soria.

and showed how one collage can have hundreds of layers, or different photographs, together. When asked how he picks and chooses the location of each landmark in the collage, he said that “the layout shapes itself... you just start to put the pieces together like a puzzle.”

Soria continued, saying, “I tend to photograph things that look interesting or iconic. I’m kind of drawn to older architecture, I try not to take pictures of things that are too new.” One of his pieces, “Chinatown” (LA 2020) is posted on Muhlenberg’s website.

Soria delved into the history of Chinatown and mentioned that “Chinatown was originally built by white people. They built pagodas thinking this is what China would look like, even though it was actually only used for religious purposes.”

Jessica Ambler, Martin Art Gallery director, curated this exhibit. When in discussion with The Weekly, Ambler said that she “first encountered Andrew Soria’s work in the summer of 2021 when I was working for Loupe, a visual art streaming service. I was immediately drawn to his brightly colored cityscapes

in a style that the artist calls ‘pop surrealism.’ I also found his process impressive. To create one of his works, Soria begins by photographing a city or a specific neighborhood, such as Venice Beach, trying to capture the spirit of the place through its built environment. He then takes hundreds of these photos and begins to build a comprehensive collage by combining and layering small portions of the photographs in Adobe photoshop (one image can have hundreds of layers).”

In regards to the installation process of Soria’s work, Ambler

commented that “Soria’s images are very high resolution, so if you’re looking at them on a computer, you can zoom in to see minute details. I think this same effect is conveyed by the very large scale prints that we made for the show. I hope that visitors take the time to look closely in order to appreciate the fine details that make up one of his works. If anyone has lived– or even visited– New York City, Los Angeles or Miami, they will be able to identify many of the buildings and landmarks that Soria includes in his images. The works are also time capsules in a sense because they document what a city looks like at a specific moment in time, creating a sense of nostalgia for earlier iterations of our rapidly evolving urban centers.”

Lizard Foley ‘24 is the Lead Gallery Assistant this semester. Foley said that “I primarily helped in the selection of the pieces through discussion with [Ambler] the gallery director, and the artist. I really like what Soria does with this work. His cityscapes are immediately recognizable due to key landmarks he uses, such as the Statue of Liberty and the Guggenheim in New York, while at the same time not accurately representing the city at all. He creates dream versions of the places he photographs by combining the very real photos into amalgamations of recognizable symbols.”

“Reset: New Dances” debuts on stage

By EMMA NORTHROP
STAFF WRITER

A crowd of eager patrons filled the theater, chattering excitedly about the performances to come. As the final stragglers shimmied across aisles to their seats, the lights began to dim and a pair of bright pink gloves burst through the curtains and the night’s entertainment began.

“Reset: New Dances” took place from Nov. 16-18 in Baker Theatre. Spectators gathered to watch 12 dances choreographed by the students of advanced dance composition. In the program, Director of the Co-Curriculum for Theatre & Dance and Artistic Director Robyn Watson emphasized that “Reset: New Dances” is an opportunity to “see what dance has been, is currently and could be.”

The first dance of the night was “a performance,” choreographed by Dani Medvedovski ‘24. Medvedovski explained her inspiration for the piece: “Challenging performance as an art form, exploring the reconstruction of audience versus performer and questioning the legitimacy of ‘meaningful’ art.” In showcasing this, “a performance” featured a satirical representation of theatre etiquette, which Medvedovski explained was “an effort to break down these norms that we have all grown so accustomed and numb to.” Medvedovski recounted the influence the cast had on her choreography, emphasizing, “If I have taken away one thing from this process it is that the best work is created when dancers work as your artistic partners rather than merely as executors of your choreographic vision.”

The second performance of the night was a highly engaging “I Decide,” choreographed by Gianna Carnevalino ‘24. The performance started with purple lighting and played with the silhouettes of dancers on stage, also featuring sound effects such as a car revving.

This piece was followed by “Red Roses for You !!! (They could be poison ivy, they might be poison oak, But anyway here is your bouquet!)” by Katrina Binks ‘24. Bink’s inspiration came from the song “Te Quiero Dijiste” by Los Panchos, which motivated her to play into “the more uncomfortable and eerie parts of love songs and music that are seemingly not meant to be listened to as those things.” This was visually achieved using a mixture of blackout transitions and bright spotlights to make the story “feel cinematic, almost as if you were watching a silent film.” The piece was equal parts beautiful and haunting, with dancers in silk dresses, black gloves and red ribbon bows around their necks. It often featured spoken word, with dancers stating “He called me dark, twisted and mean... How



PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR MADDIE CILIENTO ‘25.

“Texas Hold ‘Em” choreographed by Marissa Haluch.

sweet he’s in love.”

“Red Roses for You!!!” was followed by “Forbidden Fruit: Cinnamon, Caramel, Chocolate.” This piece was choreographed by AnnaMaria Fernandez ‘24 and was described in the program as exploring “the process and consequences of making oneself digestible in the white world.” Fernandez spoke of the experience, stating, “My dancers and I had built a rapport that encouraged them to take shared ownership of the work and that translated on stage. I’ve never felt this level of pride for a piece of mine before and I truly believe that is a result of my collaborative creative process with my cast.”

The fifth piece of the night was “Texas Hold ‘Em,” choreographed by Marissa Haluch ‘24. Dancers wore red suit jackets and engaged in perhaps the most artistic card game ever seen, featuring Lady Gaga’s iconic “Poker Face.” “Texas Hold ‘Em” was followed by “Disclosing Integration,” choreographed by Kerry Kaufman ‘24. Staged in front of a sun background, dancers clad in earth tones sought to answer the question outlined in the program of “What would it look like to reclaim a part of yourself that shame led you to abandon?”

Returning from intermission, patrons witness “On Becoming a Dream,” choreographed by Jane E. Carney ‘24. Carney described how “The process for making this piece was designed to imbed Emma [Millheim ‘24], Riley [Hammett ‘24], Maddy [Kroeper ‘27] and Maddy [Cilley ‘25’s] narratives into the work. On day one, I asked them to write about a time when dancing was difficult, and from there we made a list of adjectives that served as the poetry of this work.” The piece featured white tulle as a prop, which Carney revealed was representative of “the dream.” Carney commented on this, stating, “I was most looking

forward to how the audience would interpret the end when Emma emerges out from under it [the tulle]: is she victorious? Lonely? Resolved?”

Carney’s piece was followed by that of Alyssa Miles ‘25 titled “Ask the beautiful soul next you how their day was.” The piece featured performers sitting cross-legged on the stage and creating their own beat, with the repeated spoken word of “you are in this environment.” With perhaps the most direct audience participation of the night, viewers were then encouraged to follow along with their seating section’s “coach” for a real-life version of the video game “Just Dance.”

The ninth performance was titled “Template, if there is one,” choreographed by Danya Helperin ‘25. Helperin’s inspiration came from “the feeling of anticipating a loss and grieving before it happens as a result.” She recalled, “I experience this a lot when thinking about the things I’m grateful about, especially the people I’m close to, and I felt that I could only process it through presenting it as performance.” During the performance, the theatre appeared to shrink as attention was drawn to the two dancers, who made up the smallest cast of the show. The next piece was by Leanna Niesen ‘24 and titled “Sculpted By.” The program outlined its dedication to “the women who shape us.” The piece featured several moments where dancers would collectively pause in poses and then individuals would begin dances. “Sculpted By” was finished with the dancers’ screams of rage that stood out shockingly against the quiet theatre.

The penultimate dance of the night, “Can Never Be Young Again,” was choreographed by Gnama Hartney ‘24. Glittering dancers took the stage playing childhood games like tag and

duck, duck, goose before clocks sounded and they began to frantically clean the floors. After seeing the piece on stage, Hartney recalled, “[It] was just incredible. Knowing the process that led up to the show and getting to see all the different elements bring my vision to life was amazing.” Fiona Porter ‘27, one of Hartney’s cast members, illuminated her experience, sharing, “Working with her [Hartney] created an environment full of acceptance and encouragement, and I loved seeing her vision come to life. The performance itself was different from anything I’ve seen or been in before. The stage radiated creative energy and everyone seemed to feel strong and empowered.” The final dance was “In All My Glory,” choreographed by Lindsay Sherrick ‘25. The dance featured

voice recordings from several members of the Muhlenberg community and strobe-like light effects.

Audience member Lea Porotov ‘27 summed up the “Reset” experience when she said, “The unique elements and themes portrayed in each dance created a memorable performance that kept me absolutely captivated.” But it wasn’t only the audience who left feeling inspired, Reset: New Dances impacted all who took part. Performer Lucy Rudnick ‘27, shared that “‘Reset’ was a great debut show for me. It was inspiring to see and be a part of the incredible work done by the Advanced Composition class. I’m looking forward to my opportunity to choreograph for a department show in the future!”

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Bye ‘Berg!

By LILLY MAGOON
CAMPUS VOICES EDITOR

Something I’ve learned during my time at Muhlenberg is that I am a person who bumps into things—literally and figuratively. The Weekly has very much been one of those things.

Like so many freshmen, I had a very clear idea of how my college career would go; so of course it didn’t go that way at all. After I ran head-first into the writing tutor program my freshman year, I slowly started to approach writing—cue lightning strike and dramatic music—for fun. It took me a while to get up the courage to approach The Weekly about writing for Op-Ed (that’s your first piece of unsolicited advice: don’t be afraid, especially of The Weekly staff. We’re all just a bunch of nerds who like words). Finally, in spring 2022 I submitted my first piece to the incomparable Mustafa Hall ‘23, former Op-Ed section editor. It was an incredibly unserious “naturalistic observation” of late-night GQ goers, that I pretty much

just wrote to make myself laugh. As if my ego weren’t big enough already, when the piece came out someone laminated it and put it at one of the GQ registers. I don’t know who did it, but I hope they know how much that meant to me.

After that I wrote a few more pieces here and there, all equally unserious, and was content to just submit every few weeks if the section had room. I also took the terrifying step of taking my first creative writing class, taught by the one and only Professor Linda Miller. I was appropriately terrified, and ended up absolutely loving it (unsolicited piece of advice number two: take classes you’re afraid of). Soon after, I tripped over the opportunity to work on staff, when Mustafa reached out asking if I would be interested in coming on as an assistant.

Walking into The Weekly office is walking into a little community, which can be intimidating when you still feel on the outside of it, but after experiencing it from the other side I

can tell you we really are so excited to bring new people into our basement-dwelling world. I loved getting to work on everyone’s pieces, and discovered my passion for Campus Safety notes—seriously, they do not disappoint.

To offer just a little more unsolicited advice—because I’m a sappy English major who doesn’t know when to shut up—keep an open mind. I truly believe part of a successful college career is ending up somewhere different than you planned to, because it means you took advantage of the opportunities you bumped into along the way. Stepping into the Section Editor position with the lovely Megan Hansen ‘26 has been such a wonderful experience, and I’m honored to have been able to work with her and all of the incredible staff on The Weekly. Safe to say, of all the things I’ve tripped, bumped, smacked and stumbled into at Muhlenberg, The Weekly has definitely been one of my favorites.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LILLY MAGOON ‘24

A Headshot of Lilly Magoon ‘24.

The death of originality

By JOHNNY VEGLIA
MANAGING EDITOR

Here lies originality. R.I.P. to a flawed notion of something never being done before. No one knows for sure when originality left humankind on its own, but I am quite sure it was centuries ago. In fact, eons ago. Originality, in theory, allowed for the mind to create something new and innovative. Originality allowed for a new breath to foster a windstorm. However, originality was also a liar, manipulator and a couple other names too. Originality was really just one person having their ideas represented before another. While it will be missed, the real star is creativity.

Creativity is such a beautiful thing. It can never die and will continue to impact our lives for centuries to come. Creativity takes these once “original” ideas and requires them to be expressed in new ways and methods, allowing for the shapes and constructs to become malleable. Tropes that ring tried and true through various mediums and art forms, such as enemies to lovers, the orphan hero, love triangles, the chosen one and more, are played with and recontextualized. The mold of these dynamics are expanded upon. Creativity allows for the framework of originality to literally be demolished. Who needs a concrete path when you can explore a new journey of old and new?

Media is able to resonate when it allows for this creativ-

ity to run free and to not be burdened by the layout of these concrete paths. We don’t have to solely rely on “original stories” in which our protagonist goes on a journey to find themselves in the most generic way possible. For example, one of my favorite shows of all time, “WandaVision,” is a crazy and unlikely blend of sitcoms, superheroes and sadness, oh my! The heart of the show is Wanda Maximoff, who guides the story, allowing for the creativity to truly shine. In fact, I would even argue that there is some originality in this scenario. It’s more than just a superhero show, as it utilizes the familiarity of the original ideas of sitcoms, comics and su-

“R.I.P. to a flawed notion of something never being done before.”

perheroes, oh my, to tell a new and exciting story. While I am sure other people have thought of blending superheroes with sitcoms, being able to allow for the heart of a story to be dynamic, complex and personable, oh my, allows for this to feel unique and personable. Stories that are character-driven and focused ultimately allow for this originality to rise from the grave, though it ultimately is another false version of the idea.

Creativity is such a beautiful thing. It also is the reason why

these same mediums and forms of storytelling can feel so dynamic and entertaining. It’s not like we watch the same exact character types follow similar paths to find love, but we see how these winding paths can bleed through constructs and notions of reality to ultimately find a story that is both unique and personable to the characters and the person creating it. Creativity also allows for the larger definitions of performance to be deconstructed right before our very eyes. Just because something is being performed on a stage, does that mean we have to limit ourselves to what can and can not be done?

Does the idea of being in a physical space limit the commentary and ideas that could be expressed through language, movement and other elements? If something is created on film, does that distance between the viewer and the screen prove to be a boundary or a new way for the content to connect with the audience? While we shouldn’t be limited by the way content is produced and created, I also believe that we should utilize these different mediums to our advantage. I think it is also important to play with what is expected in these spaces. Pushing the boundaries of expression might allow for a true showcase of creativity. It might even allow for a resurrection of originality in some form.

Maybe we shouldn’t put a label on these kinds of creation or artistic process. We should just let the mind work. Whatever is



@NIKA_AKIN ON PIXABAY

Black paint drips down a woman’s face.

created will be what it is. It may be a groundbreaking piece that shakes the very core of the soul, or a piece adapted through a different lens. As long as we create from the heart and with a positive focus, then we can allow for the piece to speak for itself. No matter what, it will be innovative, unique and energetic, oh my. Some might even say original.

Why our Dance Department is not “Dance Moms”

By MADDIE DAVIDSON
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

In early September of this semester, I sat crisscrossed on Danya Helperin’s ‘25 Village Five living room floor and watched. I watched as she glided and melted and bent around the cold tile. Her body embraced a series of paradoxical movements: a gentle power – a complicated simplicity – an absolute stillness beside shattering vibration.

It made absolutely no technical sense to me.

Watching an early draft of her “Reset” choreography, I felt at peace with my minimal technical understanding, and was instead excited to pick it apart conceptually, exploring the patterns, the flow, the pacing. I read her dance as if it was responding to a Linda Miller-esque prompt, her piece gently and maybe even accidentally packed with literary devices just written in a different, more physical language.

Growing up seeing dance either at my local theater, the occasional Broadway visit or on the

“Dance Moms” YouTube-verse, I understood dance as a vessel to entertain. The costumes were sexy, the music had been recycled from Bat Mitzvah playlists. The moves made our spines ache in amazement. It took me out of whatever middle/high school trauma came up that Sunday night and plopped me into a fantastical universe—all clean smiles and flashy legs. Performance, then, was uncomplicated.

College is complicating things. My liberal arts simulation, and most of the people inside of it, like to contort meaning and play with expectations of “normal” like it’s a sandbox. Seeing shows like “In Motion” and “Reset,” or watching Alyssa Kaplan ‘25 and Kerry Kaufmans’ ‘24 seasonal Instagram story improvisations, accomplishes a similar kind of contortion and playing. I read these pieces as more of a release, a dialogue, a journal entry. Dance here is funny, emotional and messy.

Just under a month ago, I watched “Reset” as one of the

few note-takers in the audience. Looking back at my sloppy epiphanies, I’m finding phrases like “creepy smile nothing matched!!,” “Breathe blue,” “clean innocence,” “infected,” “blind trust” and “hesitant support.” These were mixed in, of course, with sloppier epiphanies like “CkntrTx contrast” or “moth in h goes together.” I note-take and reflect and ask and debrief because these dances do more than entertain. Dance is language. It speaks through patterns and flow and pacing. If you look beside the movement you can read it like a twisted picture book on satire or obsession or loss or identity. Maybe you’ll find something unexpected. Maybe you’ll find precisely what you need to find in that particular moment.

Imagine a world where Abby Lee Miller accepted dance as language before dance as entertainment. Maybe more little dancers would grow up to be sociology majors.



Dancers lined up on a bench.

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*Tiny horoscopes for a tiny campus
Weekly advice and predictions
communicated by Victor’s Lament*

Aquarius (January 20 – February 18)
You’re way beyond touching grass right now, you gotta go full-on chia pet.

Pisces (February 19 – March 20)
You feel like a goldfish this week. Remember, there are goldfish in tiny round bowls at the fair, but there are also goldfish on Tiktok that live in the Buckingham Palace of fish tanks owned by weird dual-income twenty-somethings. Surround yourself with the kind of people who would make good goldfish owners.

Aries (March 21 – April 19)
This week you are betrayed by someone you trust. They will play Wham!’s 1984 hit Christmas song “Last Christmas,” making you lose Whamageddon 2023. This will permanently alter your relationship.

Taurus (April 20 – May 20)
Make life more interesting by integrating old-timey pirate sayings into your vocabulary. Yo-ho-ho, et cetera.

Gemini (May 21 – June 20)
Don’t cry because the semester is over, smile because Henry Kissinger died.

Cancer (June 21 – July 22)
You keep slamming your pinkie toe into things this week. Your solution is to buy a tiny hard hat. This does not work, but it makes you smile, so close enough.

Leo (July 23 – August 22)
If a relationship doesn’t make your life better than it was when you were single, dump their ass. If you’re not sure, it’s probably worse—see previous sentence.

Virgo (August 23 – September 22)
This week you consider dropping everything and running away to be a cheesemaker. As fun as this sounds, remember that there’s a lot of waiting around in cheesemaking and you’d probably get really bored. At least this trainwreck is interesting!

Libra (September 23 – October 22)
Your confidence is admirable, but no matter how docile they look DO NOT approach a goose this week. The goose mafia may or may not have put a bounty on your head. Stay alert, and you didn’t hear it from me.

Scorpio (October 23 – November 21)
Maybe you should try making a human pyramid about it? It certainly shouldn’t make things worse, or if it does at least it’ll be worse in a new way!

Sagittarius (November 22 – December 21)
Hilary Duff sang it best: “This is what dreams are made of.” In other words, it’s all bullshit your brain made up for confusing subconscious reasons. The song is catchy though!

Capricorn (December 22 – January 19)
Every time you pick up a piece of fruit this week it’s either under or overripe. Be strong, it can’t last forever...right?

The double ‘A:’ athletics and the arts

By JOHNNY VEGLIA
MANAGING EDITOR

Muhlenberg offers students a wide variety of possibilities within their liberal arts degree. While some of these forms of exploration might be from the General Academic Requirements (GARs), some student-athletes go beyond the requirements to pursue their artistic interests. These athletes are just as active on the field as they are off.

Katie Raab ‘24 played on the field hockey team for her four years at Muhlenberg and decided to pursue the arts for more than just one GAR. Raab mentioned, “I have always loved the arts, and so I knew that I wanted to pursue an art major in college and that is what I am doing- I have a studio art major! I am a drawing concentration and currently working on my senior thesis project.”

Raab mentioned how the beauty of the liberal arts education and Muhlenberg being a Division III school allows for the flexibility to pursue her education and athletic endeavors. “[DIII] athletics allows my primary focus to be my education followed by athletics, not vice versa, and so I am able to devote the time and effort towards my art mainly through classes.” Raab also went on to mention the wonderful support from her teammates and coach with her pursuit of the arts. “Additionally, my coaches and teammates have always encouraged my academic and artistic pursuits which is extremely helpful and validating.”

Grace Hoffman ‘25 is a media & communication and studio art double major who is also a goalkeeper on the soccer team. Hoffman stated, “I’ve definitely found it easy and natural to

pursue my passion for the arts. I am focusing on painting as my main arts interest, however, I have found it very beneficial to be well-rounded in all art areas. I came into school as just a media & communication major and then declared my art major in the spring since I realized I had lots of time to fill those requirements. I have found it super interesting to connect my media & communication major course with my studio art major courses in terms of finding my career path. Art and painting was more of a talent/hobby but I am very grateful that I could easily make it a part of my degree.”

Hoffman mentions how the double major and her position on the soccer team allow for her to be well-balanced in multiple areas, with the opportunity to go abroad in the spring. “I am even able to go abroad to Dublin in the spring while working towards my double major. I don’t think I would be able to do that at other schools so Muhlenberg makes it really easy to pursue all my interests.”

Head Women’s Soccer Coach Kathy Prescott mentioned, “One of the biggest benefits of a Division III athletic experience is that student-athletes are able to explore multiple aspects of their identities, including the arts, while also participating in athletics and in the classroom.”

The world of the arts on campus also expands to performance, especially through music and vocals. Head Football Coach Nate Milne stated, “We have had a few athletes in music performance. As of late, Gavin Baker [‘24] has been in the Jazz Ensemble and Max Allanson-Dundon [‘21] was a music major with a focus on performance. These two did a wonderful job and many members on our team were supportive and able to see their performances.”

Alex Garrido ‘23, a kicker on the football team, mentioned how his history with vocal performance helped prepare him to play on a varsity team. Garrido stated, “I think my experience performing on stage is minimal but has aided in my athletics... It allowed me to simply focus on my performance which translated directly to athletics.”

The time component of being on the football team limited Garrido from exploring performing vocally on campus. “I think for me football always took up so much of my time that I never considered doing anything vocally for the school. Singing for me has also never been something I intended to pursue professionally, so it was never at the forefront of my mind.”

Coach Milne highlighted how the time aspect of these two fields is the main struggle for athletes who wish to focus on both. Milne expressed, “The relationship between the two is rare. As someone who sang in college and played football, the time management aspect is what prevents many from being able to accomplish both. For those on campus who have pursued both, the relationship is wonderful; it just takes a very special person. I believe there is mutual respect for all as well, knowing the time and commitment to perfect something you are extremely passionate about. There are more similarities than one might think on the surface.”

Director of Operations and Production Jessica Bien stated how this time commitment element is the major issue that limits the number of athletes who perform on stage. “There just aren’t enough hours in the day to do both (and take classes! and do homework!) at the same time.” When an athlete’s schedule is more flexible during



The outside view of the Baker Center for the Arts.

the off-season, there is the option to audition. “There would be nothing to prevent an athlete from participating in a show when their sport isn’t practicing and competing. We hold open auditions for all productions, and all students are welcome to participate.”

Another major component is athletes and artists at Muhlenberg are exceptional and devote whatever limited time they may have to perfecting what they want to do. Bien continued, “It takes a great deal of commitment and time to become excellent at any endeavor, and the students who compete in Muhlenberg’s varsity athletic teams and who perform on our stages are all excellent at and committed to what they do. It’s not an issue of what students are allowed to do, it’s a matter of balancing your commitment to your sport or your art with the demands of academic work, while staying healthy.”

There is still some involvement in the theatrical side of campus as some student-athletes do participate in the scene shop and other factors backstage. The support is there regardless. “That said, we often

have student-athletes in the audience of theatre and dance productions, and theatre and dance students often attend athletic competitions. They support their teammates and friends and participate in the diverse student life on campus,” concluded Bien.

The arts and athletics on campus continue to be two amazing areas for students to explore at Muhlenberg. While the intersection may not be common, it does allow students to hone in on the areas that they love and are passionate about.

Raab concluded, “I would wholeheartedly encourage other athletes to pursue the arts, creative expression is extremely important to personal identity and I think oftentimes team athletic environments tend to favor group identity over individual and so the arts can be a great outlet for that. Additionally, athletics is very very structured and so the arts can provide environments that are more flexible and freeing. They are both sources of happiness in my life and provide a great balance with having both!”

‘Berg basketball battles: season update

By LEXI SIPOS
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Muhlenberg men’s and women’s basketball are off to a strong start in their 2023-24 season. With the women’s team currently holding a 6-3 record and the men’s team at 2-3, the Mules have high expectations for the rest of their season.

Although the women lost their most recent game against Johns Hopkins, 77-55, Rachel Saxton ‘25, tied her career high of 16 points. Abigail Scheidel ‘24 commented on their strengths and what they are still working on. “I think our strength right now is our man-to-man defense because it has always been a struggle for us but we have been doing very well with it. We still have to work on execution of our offense and to stay disciplined for the full 40 minutes.”

In a similar aspect, Caroline Horst ‘24 commented, “I think we are in a good place and

working to get better each day. The few losses we experienced helped expose our weaknesses as a team and where we can continue to improve on going forward. Our strengths include our defense and I think we will continue to get better as we work on communicating on both offense and defense. We also are working on ways to push more in transition to reward our defensive steals and stops.” The women’s basketball team has defined goals, and there is no miscommunication about what needs to be done.

The team truly embodies hard work, and it is evident in their goals for this season. Scheidel said, “Going into the middle of the season, I think it’s really important for us to stay focused and keep working hard. I think it’s important for us to keep communicating on both offense and defense to be able to keep working as a team. Also, our season goal is to make it to the

postseason and hopefully win a Centennial Conference championship!”

The Muhlenberg men’s basketball team strives for similar goals and played against Johns Hopkins on Dec. 2. Unfortunately, they lost 66-44, but that doesn’t stop them from aiming high this season. Brandon Goldberg ‘24, spoke to the team’s ambitions. “Our outlooks going into mid-season are still very high, aiming to make a conference playoff run. With a hard non-conference schedule coming up against some tournament teams from last year it’s going to be a tough stretch coming up, but we’re looking forward to battling it out.”

While the men share common goals, they also acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses. Giovanni Rubino ‘24, spoke to the team’s strengths. “I believe our scoring is our strength right now. We have a lot of guys that can put pressure on the defense



The women’s basketball team faces Moravian.

and play unselfishly which I believe makes us hard to guard. Defending and rebounding our two things I’d say are possible improvement points for us right now. Having played some tough

out-of-conference games along with some strong in-conference opponents so far, those are areas that we are looking to get more

A fresh face in Muhlenberg athletics

@MUHLENBERG_WOMENSWRESTLING ON INSTAGRAM

After accepting the position, Head Coach of the Muhlenberg women’s wrestling team Travis Spencer has been busy laying the foundation for the program before the inaugural fall 2024 competition.

BY EVAN SCHLOTTERBECK
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

On Feb. 15, 2023, Muhlenberg College announced the addition of its 23rd athletic program, women’s wrestling, with resounding confidence and enthusiasm. The school claimed in its press release, “Further advancing its commitment to provide robust and competitive athletics opportunities, Muhlenberg College is adding women’s varsity wrestling as its 23rd varsity sport.” Especially considering the state of women’s wrestling in today’s athletic climate, Muhlenberg is jumping into one of the fastest-growing competitive sports in the nation, an initiative to be proud of. So, with this announcement, the school immediately began conducting its search for the leader of this brand-new program, a process ending in the hiring of Travis Spencer.

Spencer was officially announced as head coach of the women’s wrestling program on June 6, 2023, with the athletic department announcing the hire. According to that announcement, “Spencer will have an immediate opportunity to hire an assistant coach to support the program’s development, as the College received a Division III Coaching Enhancement Grant from the NCAA. The grant is designed to support member institutions that are committed to enhancing ethnic minority and gender representation in newly created assistant coaching positions for any NCAA-sponsored sport.” This position has yet to be filled. The job for Spencer also includes being an assistant athletic director, making his interim period even more action-packed as he integrates himself into the Muhlenberg community.

Spencer commented on his adjustment thus far, “I grew up and lived in the area, so I know

the community already, making it an easy transition for me to move to campus. Getting back into the sport of wrestling is something that I’m passionate about. I was excited for an opportunity to grow women’s wrestling, put Muhlenberg out in front of that process, and get more girls wrestling. So, when the opportunity came through, it was a good fit for me at the right time in my life, and it’s been a great ride since.” If you have traveled anywhere near the Life Sports Center, you have likely seen Spencer in one way or another.

Regarding the sport of wrestling, it has consumed Spencer for his entire life, and he is eager to bring that passion to his future wrestlers, “I wrestled my whole life since second grade through college. I wrestled at the University of Scranton and then coached at Scranton for six years afterward before moving back to the Lehigh Valley, working at Lehigh University for just under 15 years and being close with their wrestling program. I refereed here in District 11 for almost ten years. So I stayed in the sport by refereeing youth through high school kids before taking a position in New Jersey.” Spencer has engaged with wrestling in almost every way possible, a testament to his love for the sport.

In his six months at the helm, Spencer has been tireless in putting his name out there and getting Muhlenberg women’s wrestling into the minds of prospective students looking to wrestle collegiately. “For me, I have to sell a brand, which is Muhlenberg women’s wrestling,” said Spencer. “So I came up with the hashtag ‘let’s gro.’ I have been on the trail since almost day one going to different schools, communities and campuses to let people know about our college and let them know we have a women’s wrestling team, and the response has been amazing. I was in New York City a few weeks ago, I’ve been down to Princeton. I’m at Lehigh a lot. I’ve been to many different high school towns, even clubs over the last few weeks, just letting people know who we are and trying to build a program while also trying to find the right kids to build that program.”

Spencer continued to be optimistic about the state of the program heading into a busy winter recruiting period, “I’m just letting people know that we have wrestling, and the reputation of Muhlenberg will rise above any lack of knowledge when they see what kind of institution we are. Now, we have women’s wrestling, which is not common in Pennsylvania or New Jersey, but we want to make sure the girls that come here are the right fit, they feel good about where they’re at, and they build the culture of our program. So, I think we have a pretty good head start on where we want to be.”

The importance of finding the right athletes to recruit to a program cannot be understated, especially when starting a program from scratch. The athletes who represent Muhlenberg women’s wrestling will continually look to uphold the program’s values and standards, with help from coaches and athletic faculty, as they begin to cycle through the ranks. Spencer commented on finding the trailblazers of his program, “Work hard and be coachable, that’s what I want. Girls who are resilient, show high character and treat people the right way, including their teammates and the people around them. [I want to] help them understand that the world is bigger than even our program, and to have them want to be a force in that world. I want my girls to go out and be professionals. I want them to be moms. I want them to be sisters and daughters that we’re proud of and that, you know, wear our name across their chest.”

The Lehigh Valley wrestling community is strong, and Spencer looks to use that to the program’s advantage when explaining the positive and tightly-knit Muhlenberg community. “There are only two [women’s wrestling programs] in the Lehigh Valley of the 11 or 12 schools that are here,” added Spencer. “There are only two that have sanctioned women’s programs, and we’re at the front of that. So, I don’t want to let people down. I want to let prospective student-athletes know that they can come here to wrestle. We have some great [local] high school programs started on the girls’ side, with numbers increasing



The wrestling mats the night before a tournament.

year to year. They need a place to go, and some of them want to stay home. So why not us? Right? Why not us? You know, somebody has to be a national champ, why not me?”

Spencer and the athletic department have held events on campus this year to promote women’s wrestling and gauge interest from any current students. This past Sunday, Dec. 3, there was a local women’s wrestling meet where high schoolers could come to campus, learn about the program and school and compete. On Oct. 18, Spencer held an interest meeting for students currently enrolled at Muhlenberg who wanted to hear more about the women’s wrestling program.

Alexandria Konzelmann ‘26 was one of the five students who attended that interest meeting, and she had nothing but good things to say about her interactions with Spencer. “I have spoken with Coach Travis,” said Konzelmann. “He has been very open and honest with how he wants to build the program, and for me, transparency is key to making a good leader. He answers any questions that I’ve had to the best of his ability, and you can tell he is trying to build a program Muhlenberg will be proud of.” Regarding potential roster size, Spencer is aiming for 10-15 wrestlers for the inaugural 2024 season, making the five who attended the interest meeting that much more meaningful for the program.

Konzelmann, after seeing what the program and sport are about, is optimistic about its potential to land feet first on

campus next fall. “I think having the addition of the Muhlenberg women’s wrestling team will bring a major sense of inclusion for the girls on campus,” relayed Konzelmann. “I also think that it will give the campus something to rally behind, a new and exciting thing that will give them something new to watch, something some people may have never seen before.”

As fall 2024 approaches, Spencer has his eyes set on creating the next program to walk through those red doors as champions after a long, grueling season, and he has spent his time on campus well thus far. “The last six months have been really fun,” Spencer disclosed. “The university has embraced the challenge of adding this program, and we have a lot of plans to help support not just our program but other programs. This is also certainly an opportunity for young ladies to come here, wrestle, have strong academics and graduate as high-character human beings.”

To embrace creating a women’s wrestling program is a purposeful and ingenious endeavor from the College, a sign that shows the willingness to take unique steps in developing its athletics. There is a subtle buzz around the team and sport now, but that buzz will be loud by next fall when the newest Mules step onto the mat.

FROM **BASKETBALL** PAGE 10

consistent at.” When a team can identify their areas of improvement and strong characteristics, then it creates a positive team environment for success in the future.

Both the men’s and women’s basketball teams are on campus in the winter to keep a consistent practice and game schedule. Horst stated, “Being on campus during the winter break allows us to really focus on getting better each day without as many distractions. I think it grows us

closer as a team and is a great time for us to capitalize during a critical part of the season.”

In the same breath, the men’s team has a very competitive chemistry in the winter. Goldberg stated, “During winter break I feel our team is most connected on and off the court. We are one of the only teams on campus besides girls basketball and wrestling so the best way to stay busy and connected is by hanging out outside of practice and games.”

Rubino acknowledged how the ups and downs of the game

breeds success. “I’d say our goals for this season are to become the best possible team we can be day in and day out. It’s never going to be perfect but having a next play mentality through the ups and downs is extremely important. We believe if we can keep this frame of mind we’ll have a successful year.” Both the men’s and women’s teams will confront adversity. However, with Rubino’s mindset, their mentality is more than prepared to handle it.

Each team is prepared mentally, physically and tactically for the rest of their seasons. They

are outlining their goals for mental preparation, while physically and tactically attacking their weaknesses in practice. Ultimately, our men’s and women’s teams work towards a season of greatness. The women will travel to Ursinus on Saturday, Dec. 9 for a 1:00 tip-off, while the men head to Marymount on the same day for a 3:00 contest.

2023 fall season: a lot to be proud of

By OLIVIA OBERMAN
SPORTS EDITOR

In the 2023 fall season, Muhlenberg athletes clinched some incredible successes on and off the fields, courts and courses. These successes were not strictly statistical and many extended to include all of the positive experiences these athletes had while playing the sports they love. Many seniors participated in their final competitions, while several first-years kick-started their next four exciting years as Mules. Senior athletes from each fall team have elaborated on what this fall season meant to them and their programs.

The volleyball team had a fantastic season, making conference playoffs and ending with an impressive 8-3 home record– two more home wins than last year and the most wins the program has had in five years. The team’s time spent building chemistry and preparing during pre-season definitely had a positive impact on their play. This is evident in that for the first time in program history, one of their own players, Alyssa Faville ‘24, was named Centennial Conference (CC) volleyball defensive player of the year in addition to first team All-CC. Captain Julia Ficon ‘24 elaborated on the team’s overall experience, “I would say that a some of our major successes were having a great opening weekend in Virginia and splitting matches with really competitive teams, beating Dickinson for the first time in four years to get into playoffs and finally taking a set from Franklin and Marshall which was the first time we had done that in my four years. A special moment would also be having our potluck meals for Saturday games with all of our friends and family.”

The field hockey team gave consistent effort and energy all season, falling short only one goal from making conference playoffs in double overtime against Dickinson College. Two-year Captain Taylor Canfield ‘24 stated, “This season we really connected as a team, we had the most goals since 2016 as well as our longest win streak and wins since 2019.” They have made sure to focus in on these

accomplishments to remind themselves of how far they have come and how far they can go. Amongst the program’s exciting successes includes the accolades of Erin Disandro ‘26 (first team All-CC and second team All-Region) and Abigail Diglio ‘26 (second team All-CC) who ended the season at the CC’s two top leading scorers.

The women’s and men’s cross country teams placed top ten in a total of six meets throughout the fall season and accomplished their goals of placing higher in the region than they did last year. Captain Caitlin Kinnear ‘24 speaks to this culminating experience, “The cross country season went really well this year. Going into the season, we wanted to place higher in the region than we did last year, as well as beat our own personal times. Both of these goals were met as we improved by two places and most of our athletes had at least one personal best this season.” Along the way, the program made many memories and developed memorable team chemistry. Kinnear continues, “A good season memory was competing at McDaniel, which was our overnight meet in Maryland. It was a very difficult course, which helped us to improve on our endurance and work hard together. It brought us to be proud of each other for just completing the race given the course, and the trip gave us a good opportunity to spend time with each other and to bond as a team.” Many of these cross country athletes will extend their hard work and talent throughout the winter and spring track seasons and with lots of young talent they have high expectations going forward.

The women’s soccer team welcomed their brand new head coach, Kathy Prescott, at the end of last April. This transition served to provide the women’s soccer team with an enjoyable, memorable and competitive fall season. Their team motto “No Fear” served as a catalyst in the visible progress made not only on the field but within the program’s culture– raising prior standards and setting high goals for the future of the Muhlenberg women’s soccer. 2023 All-CC honorable mention and Captain, Casie Burke ‘24, gave testament

to this upwards climb. “From my perspective, our season was exceptionally positive. Not only did our stats improve, but fans noted a transformative shift in our team dynamics. From our first scrimmages, marked by exceptional goal-scoring, to a triumphant season opener, we truly began to look like a team that wanted to win at any cost. Although we had a better season than last year, I recognize that there is still room for improvement and that is what excited me. The arrival of the new coach sparked a collective fire within us, which was evident throughout the season. While I will undoubtedly miss playing this sport, I am happy to have concluded this chapter of my life with such amazing people and look forward to what Muhlenberg Women’s Soccer has in store for us next season!”

In 2022, the Muhlenberg men’s soccer team took home the CC Championsip. Following that, they entered the 2023 season ranked 22nd nationally. With competition increasing each season, the men knew they had to continue raising their standards. This increased work ethic earned them a spot in conference playoffs and yet another conference championship game this past season. Although they fell short of the title by one goal, they found successes in many corners of the season. Captain Zack Mikuta ‘24 explained, “Although the season ended in some disappointment, I’m proud of all the guys for giving a proper title defense. We improved both our overall record and our in-conference record and had six guys get all-conference honors. In terms of a special memory, it has to be beating F&M in the CC playoff at their home field for the second year in a row. That was one of our best team performances and it gave us a chance to win back-to-back conference titles.” For the first time since 2014, four of the program’s players received All-region Recognition from United Soccer Coaches and six were named to the All-CC team. Among those players is defender Sam Roberts ‘27, the second player in program history, to also receive CC rookie of the year– Richards being the first in 2019.

“Dig in” is one of the many mottos of the Muhlenberg football program. This season, they embodied it in more ways than one. The Muhlenberg football team remained in the national spotlight this season earning a 10-1 overall record, winning the Centennial-MAC Bowl Series game, and ending with a national ranking of 22 in Division III football.. Unfortunately, the team fell short of earning the championship title this season in the last two minutes of their game against #7 Johns Hopkins University. Captain, and 2023 All-CC first-team left tackle, Zachary Greenberg ‘24 gave insight into the journey. “Responding to our 2022 season with our performance in 2023 is what fueled us this entire off-season and throughout the fall season. Having a down year in 2022 at 7-4 is something that left a bitter taste in our mouths and pushed us the extra mile in every aspect this season. Although we fell short of our ultimate goal, a [CC] championship, we were fortunate enough to have another postseason victory, which has been a standard here at Muhlenberg for many years. Entering next season, we know what it takes to get that 10th regular season victory, ensuring playoff berth, and will drive us every step when preparing for next

season. We are fortunate to have the best strength coach in the country, DT, who puts in tireless amounts of effort to make us bigger, faster, stronger. We will return necessary pieces to our offense, three of five offensive lineman, our entire receiver and running back room and the best quarterback in the country. We have the pleasure of returning necessary pieces of our defense, and allow for younger guys to step up in places needed, considering we return our defensive line, safety and many other players who have experience and are ready to contribute right away. We have huge goals for our 2024 season, with our eyes on winning the Conference Championship ad then what comes after that.” It comes to no surprise that 14 of the players received all conference recognition and among those players being quarterback Joe Repetti ‘25, who also received 2023 CC offensive player of the year.

Another fall season is in the books for Muhlenberg athletics, and therefore there is a lot to be grateful for. Muhlenberg athletes could not obtain these successes without the support of administration, coaches, athletic trainers, fans, faculty, staff and volunteers. Let’s carry this mulementum forward into the winter and spring seasons!



PHOTOS BY ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY '27.

Coming up this week in
SPORTS
Dec. 7 - Dec. 13

Wrestling

MUHLENBERG vs SCRANTON

Fri, Dec. 8 @ 7:30 p.m.
Memorial Hall

Women’s Basketball

MUHLENBERG vs URSINUS

Sat, Dec. 9 @ 1:00 p.m.
Collegeville, Pa.

Men’s Basketball

MUHLENBERG vs MARYMOUNT

Sat, Dec. 9 @ 3:00 p.m.
Arlington, Va.

Men’s Basketball

MUHLENBERG vs DESALES

Sun, Dec. 17 @ 5:00 p.m.
Memorial Hall



Benjamin Carter P.h.D., acting sociology and anthropology department chair, conducts a class in the building's only room of instruction.

Muhlenberg under investigation; professor placed on leave

By KATHERINE CONLON
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

President Kathleen Harring, Ph.D., informed the campus community via email on Jan. 18 that the U.S. Department of Education's (DOE) Office of Civil Rights (OCR) was conducting an investigation into a complaint filed against Muhlenberg.

In the message, Harring noted that "Muhlenberg College is committed to a safe, equitable, bias-free environment for all students, faculty and staff. The College does not tolerate antisemitism, Islamophobia, xenophobia or any other form of harassment, bigotry or abuse nor any incitement to violence or calls for genocide. If and when there are accusations of conduct violations, these are thoroughly investigated with appropriate actions taken based on the findings."

The details of the complaint and who filed it remains unknown. "Anyone who is at least 18 years of age can file a complaint, either on behalf of themselves, another person or a group. You don't have to be affiliated with the institution to file. You just need to be 18 or older and fill out a form online. A complaint filing on behalf of

someone else must get written consent from that individual," said Todd Lineburger, vice president for communications.

The relative anonymity of the complaint, its vagueness and the ability for individuals unaffiliated with the institution to formally make these kinds of accusations make it difficult for the campus community to understand the implications of the complaint.

The College is one of many institutions that has been subject to this kind of investigation following the start of the Israel/Hamas war. This comes with an uptick in tensions on college campuses related to the crisis in the Middle East. At Columbia, students protesting for the Palestinian cause say they were attacked with chemicals during a demonstration. Both the University of Pennsylvania and Harvard college presidents have resigned following a congressional hearing on antisemitism. Also at Harvard, a group of Jewish students have filed a lawsuit against the College, alleging that their civil rights were violated. Now, Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives are "embarking on an aggressive and expansive investigation into institutions of higher education in America, targeting the academic elites they

have long viewed as avatars of cultural decay — all in the name of combating antisemitism," according to The New York Times.

This isn't the DOE's first investigation into a higher education institution in the Lehigh Valley. In fact, Lafayette College in Easton, Pa. garnered similar attention when according to The Lafayette, "The Biden administration opened a probe into Lafayette College on Nov. 16 over alleged antisemitic discrimination." In speaking with The Lafayette's managing editor, Trebor Maitin, The Weekly was able to gain some insight into the similarities and differences between the two cases.

Maitin noted that while Lafayette is also unaware of the specific contents of the complaint and the complaint's author, the letter that the College received informing them of the investigation alluded to an incident of harassment in which a pro-Palestine protestor exhibited a sign which read "from the river to the sea."

"The federal government is investigating this by federal standards, not by campus standards, where free speech, because we're private institutions, can be limited. But [the federal

government] is looking at this in a way that [asks] 'Are you taking away people's right to have a good college experience, a safe college experience. At least at Lafayette, if this investigation is related to a poster being held up, I don't know how legitimate that is,'" said Maitin. The investigation into Lafayette's policies is still being conducted, over two months after its announcement.

While the exact cause of the Muhlenberg investigation is unknown, there has been a development in Associate Professor of Anthropology Maura Finkelstein, Ph.D.'s, status at the College. Last semester, Finkelstein came under fire for her social media posts related to the conflict in Gaza. A petition calling for her removal currently has over 7,700 signatures. On Jan. 24, Provost Laura Furge, Ph.D., emailed students in Finkelstein's classes informing them that "Your professor is on leave. I am working to identify a professor or visiting instructor to continue teaching your class." The replacement professor has now been identified as John Favini, Ph.D.

One anonymous student enrolled in Finkelstein's Cultural Anthropology course described their experience saying, "I was

already really weary and suspicious when the provost was emailing us almost on a daily basis that the class was canceled for the week. Once they officially declared she was on leave I was, more or less, in a sense of panic. As a senior, having a class fall to shambles almost three weeks in makes everything so much more difficult to troubleshoot."

The student continued noting, "Because of everything with Dr. Finkelstein last semester, I wish they were more forthright and honest about the situation. We are all adults, and should be treated as such instead of everything being done behind the curtain—especially when it involved the students and in turn created a problem on our behalf."

Another anonymous student taking Finkelstein's Magic and Modernity course stated, "When I was informed that she was on leave, I was immediately upset with the College, as there were zero updates as to what was happening before then and nothing but uncertainty surrounding her absence and the continuation of the class, it really just seemed like a way to cover themselves pending the College's investigation...All in all, from the limited information that I do know, it

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Arts & Culture

WMUH presents the Radio Riff Off showcase.
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Campus Voices

Examining the Stanely Cup trend.
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Sports

Women's basketball is ready for playoffs.
PAGE 12

THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY

Serving the Muhlenberg College Community since 1883

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The Muhlenberg Weekly strives for accuracy in reporting and writing, but we acknowledge that mistakes happen. Readers are invited to submit corrections about errors in articles, and they should be submitted to weeklyeditor@gmail.com. Corrections are also brought to our staff’s attention by our own editors and writers. Our staff will review the suggested correction, consult with the author of the article, and issue the appropriate correction. Online corrections are located at the bottom of the article. Print corrections are located within the paper, on the page indicated in the online edition. However, The Weekly does not grant take-down requests for articles.

ADVERTISING POLICY

We request that advertising material be submitted by the Monday preceding publication at 5 p.m. If materials have not been received at that time, the advertisement will not run and the advertiser is still responsible for 100% payment. We reserve the right to decline any advertisement that is misleading, inaccurate, fraudulent, or deemed generally unacceptable. This determination will be made by the Business Staff in consultation with the Editor-in-Chief. The Muhlenberg Weekly maintains a distinction between its news & editorial content and advertising. As such, advertisements will not be accepted if they imitate the general style of The Weekly, intentionally or unintentionally. Examples of this include, but are not limited to: headlines, bylines, fonts, and column-arrangements. In order to make this distinction, The Weekly also reserves the right to include the word “advertisement” on any advertisement that is deemed too native.

CAMPUS SAFETY NOTES

1/15/24

Noise complaint—Report of noise complaint on N 22nd St. Unsecure Area—Report of unsecure area on Chew St.

1/16/24

Student Concern—Report of student concern on Tilghman St. Suspicious Person—Report of suspicious person at an off- campus location. Noise complaint—Report of noise complaint at MILE House.

1/17/24

Fire Alarms—Report of fire alarms sounding at Robertson Hall. Traffic—Report of hit and run at Brown Hall causing minor damage to the paint, investigation to continue.

1/18/24

Noise complaint—Report of noise complaint at Liberty and 22nd St.

Sick Student—Report of sick student at Taylor Hall

1/19/24

Alcohol violation—Report of alcohol violation at off- campus location.

Alarms—Report of panic alarms sounding at Trexler Pavilion. Fire Alarms—Report of fire alarms sounding at South Hall.

1/20/24

Alcohol violation—Report of alcohol violation at 2201 Chew St. Fire Alarms—Report of fire alarms sounding at MILE House.

1/21/24

Alcohol violation—Report of alcohol violation at 23rd and Gordon Sts.

Alcohol violation—Report of alcohol violation at Leh and Liberty Sts.

Alcohol violation—Report of alcohol violation at Walz Hall.

1/22/24

Injured Visitor—Report of injured visitor at Chew St.

1/23/24

Fire Alarms—Report of fire alarms sounding at N 22nd St.

1/24/24

Injured Student—Report of injured student at Trexler Pavilion. Fire Alarms—Report of fire alarms sounding at Moyer Hall.

FROM INVESTIGATION PAGE 1

seems like a heinous violation of Dr. Finkelstein’s academic freedom, something which Muhlenberg claims to pride itself on having.”

At the January faculty meeting, Furge asked faculty not to discuss campus policies with their students in class. She suggested that if faculty have concerns with college policies they should have conversations with their department chairs or with Furge herself. Furge then asked professors to avoid using class time to discuss policies as it reinforces the narrative pushed by critics of higher education that professors are using class time to promote political and personal agendas.

This statement incited some questioning from faculty who felt uncertain about the standing of academic freedom within the College. Finkelstein’s name was not directly mentioned during this meeting, however, allusions to her leave were present throughout this conversation on the state of academic freedom at Muhlenberg.

So, how is this investigation being conducted? And what are its implications? According to

Director of Equity and Title IX Jennifer Storm, “When allegations occur, we promptly and thoroughly address each one. Community is so important at Muhlenberg, and our top priority is responding to the needs of our students, faculty and staff.”

What is at stake with this investigation is a potential loss of funding from the federal government. “OCR’s goal is compliance, so in the event that OCR finds any allegations credible, we would expect to receive guidance on how to address the issue...It is unlikely that any funding would be at risk in this case,” said Lineburger.

On Jan. 29, an email from Furge and Dean of Students Allison Williams solicited student participation in an ad-hoc committee dedicated to “advancing dialogue and education opportunities on campus related to the war in Gaza.” This group was one of two ad-hocs introduced by Harring in a community message on Jan. 16. However, there has been no update on the status of the “Muhlenberg Ad-hoc Committee on Defining Bias Based Upon Shared Ancestry” which was meant to “define an-



tisemitism, Islamophobia, and xenophobia, offering clear guidance for our campus community.”

Haas College Center houses the Admissions Offices in addition to the offices of the President and the Provost.

PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY '27

MXL grants discontinued

A closer look at the decision to discontinue the Muhlenberg Extended Learning (MXL) Grants Program.

By KABIR BURMAN
STAFF WRITER

On Jan. 17, Gretchen Gotthard, Ph.D., dean of academic life, sent out a campus-wide email announcing the discontinuation of the Muhlenberg Extended Learning (MXL) Grants Program. First implemented in the Summer of 2020, it was created during the pandemic as a need-based program for Muhlenberg students to catch up on credits due to COVID-19 disruptions. Whether these were due to illnesses within the family, personal experiences with COVID-19, or incoming first-year students who wanted to get a head start on their studies, the program proved to be a boon for students at that time.

Rebekkah L. Brown '99, vice president for advancement, explained that “the pandemic was disruptive to the educational journey of many students at Muhlenberg, and by taking a course over the summer without additional costs, students could either catch up or get ahead on their studies.”

Brown went on to further explain that “the benefit of the program was that it allowed students to take a course over the summer at Muhlenberg, either in person or online, at no cost to the student, to support their success and continued enrollment.”

With the program coming to an end, these grants were last awarded in the summer of 2023.

Since its formation, close to 350 individual students have made use of the grant to further their educational journey. Having taken a class through the MXL Grants Program, Victoria Brady '25 mentioned how she “used it the summer before my freshman year for Literature and Film. I would say it’s definitely helped me now, as I don’t have that GAR to fulfill, so it took a lot of pressure off my plate.” Brady also mentioned how “because it was such a small class, one of the other students I was in the class with is my roommate now, which was very cool. I definitely would not have met her and become her close friend if I didn’t take the class.”

Despite these clear benefits, Brown highlighted the reasoning behind the College’s decision to discontinue the program, explaining that “the program was always intended to be temporary support in response to the pandemic. Data from the 2020 MXL Grant Program show that students who were awarded MXLs and those who applied for MXL grants but were not funded, both graduated on time at statistically the same rate and similar to rates from before COVID.” Explaining an apparent change in priorities, Brown said that “donors have now turned their interest to supporting the College in other ways — scholarships, professorships, construction projects on campus, study abroad programs, internship support and student/faculty research to name a few.”

Yet, the roots of this program were already taking hold way before the pandemic itself. In a previous interview with the Office of Communications in June 2020, Melissa Falk '92, then dean of admissions and financial aid, mentioned that discussions about such a program were already taking place in February 2020 with the School of Continuing Studies. “Prior to COVID, [MXL] was related to engaging students and solidifying the connection to the College. Building relationships with faculty and peers in a class is one way for students to connect and identify as Muhlenberg students,” Falk said. Explaining in the context of fundraising for this grant, the article goes on to highlight that these “donors were interested in MXL because it works toward the dual goals of enrollment and retention.”

The decision to discontinue the MXL grant is slightly puzzling given the college’s decline in student enrollment and subsequent budget cuts. This has led to some questioning whether or not the ability to finance such a program played a role in the decision-making process. In response, Brown re-emphasized that the “program was always intended to be temporary, and the assessment studies do not support significant enough outcomes to continue.”

PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY '27



A sign requesting mask use remains on a door in Trumbower Hall.

New semester, new support

Student organizations bringing unique passions to campus

By AMY SWARTZ
NEWS EDITOR

This past semester, there were numerous votes presented before the Student Government Association (SGA) general assembly from different student organizations requesting funds to improve their student group and bring new ideas and experiences to the wider campus community.

Disciple Christian Fellowship (DCF), was given funding for 17 students to go on a retreat in Harrisburg. SGA covered 70 percent of the cost for each individual student, while the students would be responsible for covering the other 30 percent. For nine out of the 17 students that got to attend the conference, it was their first ever DCF retreat. DCF is a Christian campus ministry group based in Pennsylvania, with a chapter at Muhlenberg. According to DCF’s website, their goal is to “raise up the next generation of leaders for the Church by training college students in Bible study, gospel-driven discipleship and

evangelism.” DCF is also open to non-Christians who are interested in learning more about Christianity.

Nate Reimer '24, president of DCF, gave his account of the weekend, where DCF left campus on Friday afternoon, and returned on Sunday afternoon. Reimer voiced, “At the conference, we are given the opportunity to grow in our relationship with God through large group lessons from the Bible, small group discussions with other students from Muhlenberg and fellowship with all the students from other campuses in different fun activities and events.”

The conference not only provides a transformative experience to students who attended, but also brings back an impact. Reimer detailed, “When we return to campus, we are always refreshed mentally and spiritually to go back to the community and serve others.” DCF typically goes to three to four conferences per year, continuously enriching the experiences of their members, greater Muhlenberg religious life and the entire campus community.

The Perkulators (Perks), Muhlenberg’s jazz dance troupe, petitioned for new uniforms this fall, and were given the needed funds to get 27 new uniforms. The Perks have been a staple of Muhlenberg’s campus since the 1990s. They do numerous performances a semester, and have a maximum of 25 members.

Sam Lipson '24, president of The Perks, described the dance troupe. “Perks is a commercial jazz dance team that aims to bring dancers together who have a passion for dancing and performing. We create a community filled with dancers who support and love each other!”

They needed new uniforms, as they’ve had the same ones for over 15 years. Lipson detailed how an alum mentioned that she had been wearing the same uniforms in 2008. There were various complications with the uniforms, all compiling over the years, to the point where new uniforms were a necessity.

Lipson shared the current issues that the Perks were facing from their uniforms. “Our old uniforms were falling apart with linings spread and thread unrav-

eling. Over the many years the team had these uniforms many had been misplaced - we think with COVID there was additional loss. Therefore, not every team member was able to have the same uniform and we lacked enough size diversity to ensure everyone had the proper fit. It was extremely important that everyone on our team currently and any new members that would join would have a properly fitting uniform and one that was in good condition.”

With the new uniforms, The Perks now have the capability to promote diversity within their members, as their new attire is much more size-inclusive. Lipson also details other “perks” of their new uniforms. “Now that we have new uniforms we are all able to look as one collective unit, while feeling comfortable in our clothing. The new uniforms also include a long sleeve that can go under the shell, which allows us to stay warm when we are performing outside in the cold.”

The Perks can perform more comfortably all-year-round, and can keep promoting a love of

dance all around campus. From performing at basketball games, to Parents Plaza at Alumni Weekend, to THAW, to the Halloween Dance Team Showcase, The Perkulators are a staple of the Muhlenberg community that carry their love of dance with them in every single performance.

A-Town Records (ATR), is a student organization on campus that provides a myriad of opportunities for student musicians, creators and collaborators. Emma Ash '24, ATR’s festival coordinator, touched on ATR’s goals. She described their mission, stating “ATR’s goal as a student-run record label is to foster creation and collaboration between musicians of all genres and backgrounds. We aim to provide student musicians with resources, educational opportunities and creative outlets, and while creating spaces for the student body to participate in music making and/or music enjoyment in formal and informal settings.”

SEE FUNDING PAGE 4

Muhlenberg holds annual THAW event

A look into the planning process for this year’s THAW.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MUHLENBERG’S OFFICE OF ALUMNI AFFAIRS

By SAMANTHA BROOKS
STAFF WRITER

On Jan. 18, Muhlenberg held its annual THAW event, which takes place on the first Thursday of the spring semester. THAW, which stands for “Toast Heard Around the World,” is a signature alumni engagement event. It is the one night each year when alumni and friends gather across the country, around the world and online to celebrate the College and each other.

THAW was created in 2014 to provide an opportunity for alumni scattered around the world to celebrate Muhlenberg on one common night. THAW started with 35 cities around the United States in 2014, and has grown to over 50 virtual and in-person events in 2024. THAW was able to thrive throughout the pandemic with the introduction of virtual gatherings, which allows for class years and affinity groups to gather more easily. This continues to be a popular option as we come out of the restrictions of the pandemic. To date, THAW has engaged over 10,000 alumni, guests and students.

One of the student hosts, Dylan De Magistris ‘24, said, “As far as my part went, me as well as my other hosts Nicole [Tahmoosh ‘24] and Justin [Billich ‘24], wrote the script for the event where we introduced the different performance acts, prizes and the end of the night toast! An interesting fact is that alumni from all around the world host their own THAW parties/cele-



brations at the same date/time we host it here at Muhlenberg! THAW is an excellent activity for students to get engaged with the Muhlenberg community through the celebration of the place that brought us all together. For me, THAW was an excellent opportunity to collaborate with different offices, performance groups and new friends as well as gain leadership and public speaking experience.”

Brad Ludwig, director of alumni affairs and chief organizer for THAW, said, “Our number one goal of THAW is to engage alumni and students from throughout the world to reconnect with the College or make new friends

in their community or affinity group.”

THAW is organized by the Office of Alumni Affairs in conjunction with alumni volunteer hosts who secure venues and promote their events to alumni living in their area or affinity. This year, nearly 80 alumni volunteers helped coordinate and plan 51 events throughout the country, and there is even an international alumni group that meets virtually.

In addition to the alumni THAW events, Muhlenberg also hosts a student THAW each year. The student THAW is a cooperative effort between Student Affairs, Sodexo and Alumni Affairs.

Nearly 350 students attended this year’s student THAW. Billich says, “My experience was great! I served as one of the three hosts for the evening, and I think that the biggest takeaways from the event were that the energy was high, the performance groups did an amazing job and I’m so lucky to have hosted the event alongside Dylan DeMagistris and Tahmoosh, two of my close friends. We served previously as orientation team leads together and it was a ton of fun to team up one more time before we graduate this spring.”

Ludwig recalls a quote that was made to the writer of last year’s THAW article, emphasizing that

Alumni celebrate THAW in the Lehigh Valley. it still rings true: “A really big takeaway is that while student THAW is always so much fun, the fun doesn’t end after you graduate! While you might not participate in student THAW after you graduate, there are many alumni who host THAW events in their cities at local venues. Alumni across the world raised a glass to Muhlenberg on the same day as our students. Student THAW is only a piece of the larger THAW program, and we hope you continue to find a THAW event in your city after you graduate!”

Next year’s event will be held on Jan. 16, 2025.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SGA

FROM FUNDING PAGE 3

This fall, ATR was given funding for their second-annual Muhlapalooza. Ash, described Muhlapalooza, stating “Muhlapalooza is a music festival that intends to bring students from all parts of campus life together for one night in celebration of music. It is an amalgamation of outside artists, student artists, acapella groups, dance groups, clubs & organizations and student art vendors who populate Seegers during the festival! This year’s Muhlapalooza will be held on April 6th from 4p.m.-11p.m.”

Last year, Muhlapalooza was a huge success, bringing exposure to talented new artists, while also proving to be a valuable experience for the campus community. It was held in the Event Space, and was completely free for all students, making it easily accessible for the entire campus community.

Ash detailed the current status of the Muhlapalooza process, after the SGA budget approval. “The actual General Assembly and vote went smoothly, and the school is finishing up the con-

tracts for lineup for Muhlapalooza!”

The relationship between student organizations and knowledge of Student Government funding is intricate, with varying levels of comprehension throughout the student body. There is a disconnect on campus in the understanding of exactly how Student Government can help fund organizations and their events, conferences and aid in the general support of their advancement.

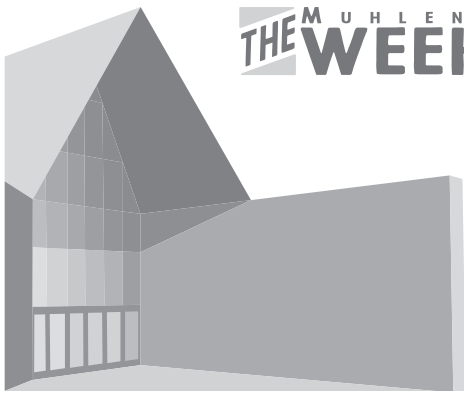
All full-time students, as part of their tuition, pay the Student Activities Fee. As of Fall 2022, the Student Activities Fee is \$142.50 per semester. The Dean of Students Office gets \$50 of this funding, and SGA is responsible for allocating the rest. This funding goes to permanent organizations on campus, which includes groups like MCEMS, The Muhlenberg Weekly, WMUH and Muhlenberg Activities Council. Permanent organizations have specific amounts of funding given at the beginning of each semester. The rest of the money from the Student Activity Fee goes to non-permanent organizations, as they request

funds throughout the semester, on a basis of need.

As of Spring 2022, the Student Government Association has \$51,145 in their General Fund per semester. This General Fund is open to all student organizations on campus, where they can request funds as they see fit for the betterment of their organization. Requests are done through Student Club and Organization Request for Expense (SCORE) forms. If requests are under \$1,000, the SGA finance committee will determine the approval of the request. If an organization is requesting over \$1,000, they must come to an SGA General Assembly meeting and present their request to all members, where all members of SGA in attendance will vote on the request.

DCF, The Perks and ATR are just a few of the many student organizations that are doing phenomenal work in improving the campus community. These organizations that represent the student body and their own interests are an integral part of Muhlenberg, giving a voice to students and an outlet for their unique passions.





THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY

ARTS & CULTURE

“The more I wonder, the more I love.”
- Alice Walker

Radio Riff Off goes off

By SINHAYANA SRINIVASAN
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

The Radio Riff Off Showcase, which took place Jan. 27, demonstrated a concert of original music written by our very own Radio Riff Off winners from last semester. Radio Riff Off was an event hosted by WMUH for musicians to display their artistic talent through original songs. They collected submissions, and even though the competition was fierce, finalists were picked and given a final show at the event. The winners were voted on by three judges, one student judge and two industry professionals.

The two students who won were given the opportunity to perform in the Red Doors at the Radio Riff Off Showcase, with the first-place winner headlining. The event started with Harry Glicklin '26 opening the show and hosting. He was involved in the planning and organizing for the Radio Riff Off Showcase and helped coordinate with 'Berg Production as well as gather additional equipment. Glicklin said, “While WMUH has a full-time staff member who was very helpful in this process, it was mostly a student-run event and

PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY '27



Radio Riff Off first-place winner Hannah Winter '27 performs original music at WMUH's Showcase.

was a collaboration with lots of people's different talents. It was really special.”

The second-place winner, Alena Ruckh '24, opened the showcase and started with the song “idontwannabeyouanymore” by Billie Eilish, which already had the audience vibing. She continued with two original pieces called “plastic stars” and “tunnel vision,” which were

hits amongst the audience. She finished her opening by singing the song “Graceland Too” by Phoebe Bridgers.

Ruckh expressed being nervous before her performance, but was glad that she took the leap and stepped outside her comfort zone. She said, “I was proud of myself for going through with it, but honestly did not expect to place, as literally every contestant was so

incredibly talented. When they called my name for second place, I had to do a double-take! I was so honored to have been chosen as runner-up, and so grateful to have gotten the opportunity to do the competition!”

First-place winner, Hannah Winter '27, was the headliner for the event and sang an original song called “Loser,” and followed it with other original pieces. Winter originally applied to participate as she had a huge passion for writing music and wanted to share her talent with others. Once she was on the stage, she was so awed and touched by the audience's support. Winter said, “It was so welcoming and wonderful to share so much of my music to people who seem to genuinely appreciate it. I'm so grateful for all my friends and family who came. I'm feeling confident in myself and that's what is making me feel special!” Winter was phenomenal, and the viewers were amazed by her talent.

Lindsay Batzar '26, music director of WMUH, excitedly said, “I think the performance was really great; it was amazing and emotional to watch students perform songs and I think

they're both well-deserving for winning the competition.”

The showcase was a huge success, and it was a wonderful experience for both the performers and the audience. It was meaningful for aspiring musicians to get a real, hands-on experience on how concerts work. Glicklin explained that this was a great opportunity by saying, “With this event, we try to provide the same concert experience that we give to the professional local bands we invite, so we want to provide that same performance experience to these student musicians.” We hope to see Radio Riff Off continue being a popular event on campus, with more support and love from students to participate and cheer on fellow artists.

Marilyn Rajesh '26 shared this sentiment, saying, “I thought it was amazing, and being a former Radio Riff Off contestant, I am so glad to see so many budding artists given the platform to showcase their original songs and I look forward to seeing more original artists perform their songs on campus.

The art of detail

By SHINAM HUSSAIN
ARTS & CULTURE EDITOR

In the Baker Center for the Arts (CA) Galleria, there is currently an exhibit displayed entitled “Humanly Possible.” It showcases the work of Ronald Gonzalez, who is a contemporary sculptor, installation and assemblage artist. This art medium deals with the construction of three-dimensional pieces of work that protrude from a solid or defined surface. Gonzalez is known for exploring the intersections between found objects and figuration within his art. His art revolves around connecting worn materials that are representative of personal memories and histories, which he creates hybrid head structures. His work fuses these personal memories with forgotten objects to portray humanness. The series of heads displayed in the exhibit are shown as anonymous but individualized portraits that capture human tragedy and human comedy.

The heads convey a connection between the art and the creator. The discarded materials used for each sculpture represent the idea of connecting life and death, inanimate with animate, and inhuman with what is humanly possible.

Director of the Martin Art Gallery Jessica Ambler stated her reasoning for displaying Gonzalez's work, saying, “Gonzalez reached out to me with an exhibition proposal which was incredibly unique and unlike anything I have staged yet here at Muhlenberg. Since I have focused quite a bit on exhibitions featuring new media— things such as video/motion art, digital composites and 3D fractal images— I felt that it was time to circle back to a more traditional art form.”

The CA Galleria and the Martin Art Gallery have previously showcased different mediums of art that have challenged people's conventional ideas of artistry and artistic expression. Ambler explains, “When looking at Gonzalez's work, I was struck by each object's uniqueness. Each of the heads in the series is composed of entirely different materials such as plastic toys, old hats and musical instruments.”

Anna Hanley '25 said, “I love the exhibit, it is so cool. I think it's interesting how it compels you to look at the art closely to fully see all the details and materials that make up the heads. Because at first glance you're kind of like, ‘what is this?’ and then when you give it a closer look with more focus

you begin to appreciate it in its full form and begin to think about it.”

Ambler spoke to the compelling nature of the sculptures and how they draw observers in by saying, “Close inspection also allows viewers to contemplate the connections between consumerism and waste through the integration of detritus and found objects made useful once again by the artist.”

“These individualized elements infuse each head with a distinct personality and a liveliness all its own,” Ambler continued.

The exhibit is unique from others the Galleria has shown, both in its meaning and its art form. Ambler provides her reasoning for the different display by stating, “Sculptures can often be difficult to display well since many sculptures are large, heavy, and need to be seen from multiple angles to be fully appreciated. Gonzalez built the custom shelves used in the exhibition and the way the heads are laid out on them allows visitors to get up close and inspect each work individually.”

The exhibit is in the Galleria until April, for observers to look around and take in the head sculptures, and appreciate the detail put into each piece. Ambler

PHOTO BY SHINAM HUSSAIN '25



stated, “Each is approximately life-sized and I think this not only lends the work an air of vitality but it also allows viewers to appreciate art on a human scale.”

A sculpture by Ronald Gonzalez currently on display in the CA Galleria.

2024 Latin American film festival premieres

Muhlenberg is back with four screenings of Latin American films from Jan. - Feb.

PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY '27

By DINA MALTZER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The 2024 Latin American Film Festival opened Tuesday, Jan. 30, with a showing of the Colombian film, “El Olvido que seremos (Memories of My Father.)” The film is the first in a series of five movies from various countries in Latin America presented to students and the broader community over the next few weeks.

Through these films, Professors Mirna Trauger Ph.D., Amelia Moreno and Liliana Lugo-Herrera, Ph.D., of the Spanish Department, who organized the festival, hope to illustrate the diversity of culture and experience that exists within Latin America, a region which they argue is often stigmatized and reduced to a monolith.

“My hope was to also support the many initiatives on campus that were working toward cultivating understanding, mutual respect and meaningful engagement with different perspectives and experiences, particularly those of historically under-represented and marginalized groups,” reflected Trauger.

In a similar vein, Moreno highlighted the festival as an opportunity “to increase global



Students attend the first screening at the Latin American Film Festival.

awareness, a window to see social and political issues in different parts of Latin America... to see a little more of what is really happening in these countries, how life is there, why some people are risking everything to go to the United States” while others remain in their home countries.

The faculty also emphasized the importance of viewing films produced outside of Hollywood, focusing on the diversity of cinematographic techniques. Speaking about the films selected for the festival, Moreno added that “these films are powerful artistic expressions. Students are going to see innovation, creativ-

ity [and] expression, from other parts of the world.”

Muhlenberg’s Latin American Film Festival was born in 2013 and is now in its fourth iteration. Trauger developed the concept of the festival out of her deep appreciation for Latin American culture and a growing interest in cinema. She views the festival as an opportunity to expose students to different perspectives in community and through the entertaining medium of cinema.

When the festival first began, all five films were shown over the course of a week, each followed by a Q&A session. Now, the festival, which spans three weeks, has grown to include members of the community, student presentations, raffles, Kahoot games and guest speakers. The final film, “El Techo” will feature a virtual appearance by actor Enmanuel Galván.

To accompany the films, Trauger, Moreno and Lugo-Herrera partnered with Executive Chef Michael Brack to develop specialized menus representing the cuisines of each country from which a film is being shown. The special menus, which include foods outside of the Wood Dining Commons’ normal menu offerings, will be served on the same nights that the movies are shown.

In particular, this year’s festival focuses on the theme of “The Pursuit of Happiness: Family, Friends, and Community.” When asked why they selected this theme, the three professors responded unequivocally, “Why not?” Within a media cycle that chooses to focus on the negativity surrounding Latin America, taking the opportunity to celebrate the family, community and happiness within the region seemed like the logical choice. Once the faculty had chosen this theme, they worked to find films that fit within it, ultimately selecting films from Colombia, Mexico, Argentina, Costa Rica and Cuba.

Lugo-Herrera, who joined the project this fall, reflected that “Oftentimes to talk about Latin America becomes talking about trauma or so many painful topics that for once I was very happy to talk about joy and community and how great it is to have family... and that happens across the Americas as well as in migrant communities.”

The films do touch on difficult topics, including the difficulties of immigration, illness and human rights violations; however, the thread that ultimately ties all five films together is human connections. Moreno asserted that these films focus on positivity and hope within difficult situations because “that is who we are in Latin America. There are so many things that have been wrong, but we have humor.”

Julian Torres ‘25, who was a student presenter and panelist for the screening of “El Olvido que seremos (Memories of My Father.)” provided his insight on the festival saying, “I think it’s important to show that we are more than just our trauma. In Latin media there is definitely an element of pain and trauma, but there is also always a way to flip into something that can bring joy and togetherness. So we should focus on that more.”

As the faculty organizers reflected on the experience of hosting these film viewings, what stuck with them most was the joy of seeing students’ reactions to these powerful films and of getting to re-see the films through their eyes. “There is such an inherent joy in seeing your culture represented on the screen,” Torres added.

The Latin American Film Festival will continue with showings of “The Wolves” on Thursday, Jan. 30, “Truman” on Feb. 9, “The Return” on Feb. 12 and “On the Roof” on Feb. 15.



Your neighbors at: 2301 W Liberty St

Art workshop shines light on wellness

Encaustic artist Terri Yacovelli demonstrated how students can participate in art wellness.

By SHAIYAN FEISAL
ARTS & CULTURE EDITOR

On Jan. 24 the Martin Art Gallery held an Art Wellness workshop hosted by artist Terri Yacovelli. She discussed her work with encaustic painting, or painting with hot wax. She uses beeswax and damar crystals to make an encaustic medium. Then, she uses the encaustic medium and colored pigments to make encaustic paint. The paint goes on a rigid surface such as a wood panel. Each layer of wax is fused with a heat gun or a blow torch. There are typically layers created that are either opaque or semi-transparent to create multiple layers and luminosity.

Due to the complexities of encaustic painting, Yacovelli couldn't hold an encaustic painting workshop at Muhlenberg College, but she brought some of her encaustic artwork. Participants were allowed to touch the artwork and get a first-hand look at the bright colors and luminous work.

She then started her art wellness workshop with the goal of materials experimentation, introspection and self-expression. Art wellness can be facilitated by an artist or an art professional, but it can also be self-directed, meaning anyone can facilitate art wellness by themselves. It is focused on self-expression through non-judgemental exploration or materials. Art wellness can also include mindfulness, meditation and spirituality. Yacovelli highlighted how art wellness can help reduce stress and increase self-esteem.

Yacovelli asked the group to draw lines using charcoal and show what it is like when one is happy. Group members drew long and loopy lines, showcasing a joyous feeling. Next, Yacovelli asked members to draw lines ex-



Students pose with their work at the Art Wellness workshop.

pressing what it feels like to be angry. Participants drew thick and dark lines close together. They then erased their lines using a paper towel to create a smeared background. Yacovelli mentioned how regularly partaking in art without an emphasis on what it looks like can improve one's well-being.

Yacovelli then moved on to an inner circle concept using watercolor. She explained how "the [COVID-19] lockdown created a pause and contemplation for many about what is important." The objective of the inner circle

is a personal art exploration into what each person's inner circle looks like. What would be included are people's loved ones, organizations and activities that are essential in one's life. Before adding color to the painting, Yacovelli explained that color psychology is the study of the effects of color on people's minds, bodies, moods and behaviors.

When asked by The Weekly how long she has been doing these workshops, Yacovelli stated "I have recently retired from many years as a Studio Art teacher and Adjunct Professor.

My interest in arts in health-care led me to develop these workshops." Yacovelli expressed that "art is for everyone. Creating art decreases stress, fosters self-awareness and helps individuals manage emotions. Sometimes your art can assist you in visually working out things that may not be able to [be] explain[ed] with words. There is also joy in the process through material exploration. A person with a project is a person with a purpose."

In regards to why students should engage with art wellness,

Yacovelli emphasized that "art wellness aims to integrate mindfulness with the creative arts to improve our wellbeing... It's all about intention."

When inquired about how Yacovelli was introduced to Muhlenberg, Jessica Ambler, director of the Martin Art Gallery, stated "I was fortunate enough to have the teaching artist, Terri Yacovelli, reach out to me last year when she inquired about workshop opportunities at the gallery. I was incredibly impressed with her resume.

This wasn't the first time an art workshop was hosted at the Martin Art Gallery. Ambler mentioned that "last semester a Muhlenberg alumna, Sue Feely Gettlin '82, taught an art workshop in Martin Art Gallery which focused on the practice of paper cutting. Some of her work was featured in the 11th Annual Alumni Art Show last fall and in her workshop, she taught students how she creates them.

Hanajah White '26, a gallery assistant for the Martin Art Gallery, was one of the participants in the art workshop. "I really enjoyed the emphasis on the workshop not being like an art class, but it brought light to one's mental well-being and awareness of their emotions. I loved how the artist/instructor, Terri Yacovelli, told those in attendance, including myself, that this was less about perfection and more about one's self-expression, exploration, and healing of one's mental health... I can't wait for more events like this where it takes the pressure off of students to be perfect as well as being able to have events where you can unwind because this event did that for me personally," said White.

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I love the LANTA, and here’s why you should too

By Sonny Berenson
Contributing Writer

For many fortunate individuals, going to college often serves as a young person’s first true taste of autonomy. With such blissful freedom, the question of how one will choose to explore their new world comes into play. At a school like Muhlenberg, the tight-knit community and active social life makes it seem like the whole world is right at your fingertips; so much so that students, specifically first-years, don’t need to leave campus for much. On one hand, we are incredibly lucky to have such a strong home base. However, students often get too wrapped up in campus life to venture outside of Muhlenberg’s bounds.

Mulenberg students are given free access to the Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA) bus system, a vast network that services the Lehigh Valley. For over 50 years, the LANTA bus system has provided over 5.6 million rides annually to Pennsylvania commuters. Alongside the LANTA bus is the transit app, which allows riders to view where bus stops are, as well as when buses are arriving or departing. From sitting in Java Joe and asking random students about their knowledge of the LANTA, I came to learn that unfortunately, a large portion of Muhlenberg students are unaware of the fact that they have access to the bus system. Amongst those who are aware of the LANTA bus, few said that they have ever chosen to utilize this resource. Even on the times



The LANTA Blue Line passes Seegers Union.

my friends and I took the bus to a concert at the PPL center or to shop in Bethlehem, we rarely, if ever, saw other Muhlenberg students.

I was inclined to wonder why Muhlenberg students choose to not take the buses, whether that be out of fear of public transportation, confusion regarding the process, or a lack of desire to know the greater Allentown community. I asked students further questions, such as if they knew of any restaurants or businesses in downtown Allentown, or of local events or politics of the area, many of which knew little to nothing about the city.

Especially for first-year students who are not allowed to have cars on campus, the LANTA bus is the most accessible and affordable method of transportation that would allow students to explore the Lehigh Valley.

Personally, having the control and ability to take myself wherever I want is the true measure of freedom. As a native New Yorker, I didn’t have much of a choice to develop my own sense of independence, as self-sufficiency is embedded into the culture. As Paul Krugman states in his New York Times piece, “An Ode to the New York Subway,” public transportation “brings

one into regular, if casual, contact with people of different economic classes and ethnicities.” With public transportation, I was granted autonomy: a tangible measure of my capability and independence. With this came a greater depth of understanding of the communities in which I’ve inhabited throughout my life.

For students that grew up in less urban environments, or those who grew up with less individual freedoms, the idea of taking public transportation can be terrifying, and understandably so. Fear-mongering on the news perpetuates the idea that cities are terribly dangerous

places, which creates an intense stigma. Oftentimes, this stigma is rooted in misinformation and prejudice, as crime is an unfortunate factor within much larger and more diverse communities. Although cities and public transportation systems are not devoid of harm, unfortunately, danger exists in every facet of life. To a fearful student, I would suggest taking a group of friends with you on a LANTA adventure to Giant, or even on a simple two-stop trip to a new location and challenging yourself to make it back to school. These small acts will create a portfolio of minor victories that will inevitably lead to a strengthened sense of independence.

I feel incredibly privileged for my experiences, as I developed not only a complex understanding of the true meaning of community, but my own capabilities. Early childhood experiences of taking the Queens city bus to the library to do my homework or to the playground with friends after school led me to feel confident in the fact that there was no destination out of my reach. This confidence in my individuality has seeped into every aspect of my life, whether that be seizing unfamiliar opportunities, making spontaneous decisions, or simply scheduling my own doctors appointments. For this reason, I implore Muhlenberg students to take the leap into adulthood and travel somewhere new, as you’ll never know what your community truly has to offer until you seize the opportunity to explore it.

“Eileen”

By Katherine Conlon
Editor-in-Chief

Heyyy... the second installment of the Sad Girl Book is finally here. Now, I know what you’re thinking: “What took so long?” Well, last semester I wasn’t reading sad girl books as much as I was the sad girl reading books assigned to me by professors who don’t care about fulfilling my insatiable desire for depressing literature (which is honestly really rude and inconsiderate of them). However, I made winter break my bitch and read up on my sad girl books, one of which was “Eileen” by iconic sad girl author, Ottessa Moshfegh. This book was recently made into a feature film starring Academy Award-winning sad girl, Anne Hathaway. It’s been getting a lot of buzz lately, and for a good reason: this book is wild.

Set in the 1960s (objectively the time period in which sad girl books flourished the most), the story follows a 24-year-old Eileen Dunlop. What makes this book particularly interesting

and imparts an eerie, yet nostalgic tone is the narration. Moshfegh uses first person, however, Eileen is recounting the novel’s events several decades later in her old age. All of the text’s action takes place in the week leading up to Eileen’s disappearance from her hometown, which she dubs “X-ville.” Within X-ville, Eileen lives with and cares for her alcoholic father who has spiraled after her mother’s death. While this sounds very noble, don’t get it twisted, Eileen is no saint. Moshfegh is an expert at writing suffocatingly unlikeable protagonists, and Eileen is no different. A major aspect of this unlikability is the grotesque nature of her characterization. Eileen does not shy away from sharp, often blunt rhetoric surrounding her body. Moshfegh describes Eileen as self-loathing, which is evident in her desire to shield herself and others from observing her body. Reading is often seen as a source of comfort for many; people dislike having their assumptions or beliefs challenged, especially when they are engaging in



an activity for pleasure. Eileen’s bluntness surrounding not only her appearance but also how she perceives others and the world around her is intended to make readers uncomfortable and characterizes Eileen as an antihero.

Like her father, Eileen is drunk much of the time, lives in filth, limits her showers, barely eats and is so repulsed by her own sexuality that she swaddles her genitalia out of shame. Eileen works as a secretary at an all-boys prison and desperately desires two things: the love and attention of her male coworker, Randy, and to escape her life in X-ville and move to New York City. I’ll give you a hint, she gets one of these things. Her life at the prison is fairly monotonous

until Rebecca, the prison’s new director of education, arrives. Rebecca is confident, delegate and fashionable, all qualities that Eileen feels like she lacks. From the minute Rebecca steps foot on the prison’s grounds, Eileen is transfixed. Yes, not only is this book unsettling, it’s sapphic as well (huge)! Over the course of a few days, Rebecca and Eileen develop a friendship, which leads up to the night of Christmas Eve when Rebecca invites Eileen to her house. In a shocking twist of events (which I will be keeping vague to avoid spoiling), Rebecca shocks Eileen by exposing an ulterior motive she had when inviting Eileen over. This twist is so unexpected that I literally gasped (I am dramatic so take

that with a grain of salt). The question on everyone’s mind: do I recommend “Eileen?” My answer: while it is not my favorite Moshfegh book (I’m looking at you “My Year of Rest and Relaxation”), it captures her essence as a writer. “Eileen” is an incredibly detailed portrait of a pained woman who lives in a constant state of self-hatred, while still managing to be an entertaining novel meant for general consumption. So, yes, “Eileen” has the Sad Girl Book Club stamp of approval. *However, if you are sensitive to topics of sexual assault, then I would suggest reading at your own discretion.*

Water bottle dopamine

By Emily Nally
Assistant Campus Voices Editor

What on Earth is going on with reusable water bottles and why does everyone care so much? Unless you have been living under a rock, you may have noticed the recent spike in people’s interest in reusable water bottles, especially with a brand called Stanley. All over Tik Tok and Instagram, people of ages ranging from 8-years-old to 50, are going absolutely crazy over Stanleys. People are camping outside of stores to get new releases of the cup, stampeding Target, buying multiple bottles and then posting about it. You can’t watch TikTok or Instagram Reels without stumbling on someone using their new cup. It isn’t just Stanleys either, with people buying a new brand called Owala. Meanwhile others argue that their Hydroflasks and Yetis, cups that were once also extremely popular, are better than any of these new bottles. While the whole situation seems materialistic and superficial, could the overconsumption of these bottles be doing more harm than good? Is there a need to be poking fun at those who have them?

Reusable water bottles have been around for years, but recently, as people have become more aware of their carbon footprint and the plastic waste America alone creates—U.S. households generated an estimated 51 million tons of plastic waste in 2021, of which only 2.4 million tons were recycled—reusable water bottles have become more common. In 2019, Hydroflasks



became insanely popular, especially with younger generations, and was spread through social media. Many took to making fun of the mostly young girls who owned them, creating the term “VSCO girls,” as many liked the HydroFlask for more aesthetic reasons. Now we have a repeating trend with the Stanleys, with mostly women buying them, and now, just like the Hydroflasks, they are being made fun of. I find it interesting and somewhat odd that these jokes are aimed at women who just want a cup to use. It sometimes feels as though teens are ridiculed for

liking or doing anything. We see it in all kinds of trends.

To some extent, I find it useless and tiresome to hear these repeating jokes poking fun at girls just liking something, and in some ways, the whole feud over Stanleys just feels like a target towards women, scrutinizing them for simply liking a cup. But that has a fine line. While I’m not for making fun of girls who just like a cute cup, which might I add is making them drink more water than they were before, as several articles have found, buying multiple of the same exact cup is contrary to its purpose. By buy-

ing a reusable water bottle, you are reducing the amount of plastic being wasted, but when you are buying many of the same water bottle in different colors, you are in some ways creating more waste. It’s overconsumption at its finest. The Stanley company knows this too, and they seem to target these women and girls with their cups to lure them into buying more, especially with their new color drops, which can be appealing and enticing. This, of course, just gives Stanley even more money than they already have gained. Keep in mind, the production of new water bottles

uses many natural resources and generates lots of carbon emissions, not to mention when this trend possibly dies and we’re left with Stanleys filling up landfills. You don’t need seven different reusable water bottles. With that being said, there have actually been some people on TikTok, one named “Lead Safe Mama,” that show that Stanley cups have traces of lead in them, according to their at-home tests. While these tests may not be 100 percent accurate, it is definitely something to be wary of as well, besides the overconsumption of the cups.

At the end of the day though, reusable water bottles are better for the environment and help remind you to drink water throughout the day. But it shouldn’t matter what kind of bottle you have, and whether it’s “trendy” or not, because they all do the same thing. If a cute bottle makes you happy, get the cute bottle, but let’s not make fun of others for following or not following a trend. Trends repeat themselves, and I’m sure in a few years (or months) there will be a new water bottle on the market, urging you that their bottle is the best one yet and you have to have it. Resist the temptation to overconsume! Get the water bottle you want, but don’t get a thousand of the same kind, and remember their purpose is to help the environment and reduce the waste of plastic.

MUHLENBERG COLLEGE THEATRE & DANCE

IN MOTION 2024

CHOREOGRAPHY
BY FACULTY
& GUEST ARTISTS

NATALIE GOTTER ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
ELIZABETH BERGMAN
HEIDI CRUZ-AUSTIN
ANITO GAVINO
SAMUEL ANTONIO REYES
ROBYN WATSON
& GUEST ARTIST TOMMIE-WAHEED EVANS

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FROM **BASKETBALL** PAGE 12

older guys benefited me in a way that made me not just a better basketball player but a better person overall.”

Along with Greene, Michael Feroci ‘27 and Peter Stanton-Shepard ‘27 have also had large roles in each of their first seasons. With injuries to Luke Gordos ‘25, who missed a handful of games, and Nate Hoffman ‘26, who is now out for the season, it’s been essential for the team that some of the first-years stepped up in bigger roles.

“The young guys have been great in helping us reach our goal of winning the conference. Feroci brings a certain kind of toughness and physicality that nobody

else on the team has. He plays harder than anyone on the court and does all the little things needed to win. Stanton-Shepard has really embraced the starting role nicely. He’s a three-level scorer and does whatever the team needs him to do, whether that’s scoring, rebounding or blocking shots for us. He’s a very unselfish teammate,” commented Brandon Goldberg ‘24.

The Mules comfortably beat Washington College this past Saturday, winning 90-61 in their largest win of the season. In the game, which was Goldberg and Rubino’s “Senior Day,” both of them scored 20-plus points. The team also reached a total of at least 90 points in a regulation CC home game for the first time

in a decade.

This week, the team will go up against two schools that will likely finish ahead of them in the standings. After their battle against Swarthmore on Jan. 31, the team will travel to Lancaster, Pa. on Saturday, Feb. 3, to take on Franklin & Marshall College. Muhlenberg lost to both schools in their first matchups against them this season, so hopefully this week they can turn it around and beat two teams they may play in the postseason if they’re able to keep their current spot in the standings.



HEAD COACH KEVIN HOPKINS /
PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY ‘27



JAYSON WILLIAMS-JOHNSON ‘25/
PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY ‘27

FROM **PLAYOFF** PAGE 12

and well-being. “The basketball season is long, and with school and extracurriculars, it puts a lot of stress on us mentally and physically,” explained Saxton. “However, I would say that we have really strong chemistry on and off the court, so knowing that my teammates have my

back helps a lot, especially now that we are trying to make our ‘playoff push.’ Our coaches have also been very understanding, and we’ve done a lot more recovery after practice this year compared to previous years.”

The Mules rank first in made three-point field goals and fourth in three-point field goal percentage in the Centennial

Conference— a testament to their style of play. “I wouldn’t consider it a focal point,” said Saxton. “However, we have a lot of strong shooters on the team, and we trust each other that when the ball is in the air, it’s going in the basket. Coach has also always said that basketball is an ‘in and out’ game, so when everyone touches the ball during

a possession it makes it hard to stop, especially when you have five players on the court who can score in several different ways.”

All of the statistics and strategies are a wash if the team is not bought into a common goal, and this team certainly has that quality. Saxton affirmed, “I remember after the Gettysburg game on Jan. 11, Coach Rohn

asked the team, ‘What is your goal this year?’ And everyone on the team said, ‘We want to make playoffs.’ So, it’s very nice to see that every individual on the team wants to win.”

Catch the Mules in action on Centennial Conference TV on Saturday, Feb. 3, at 1:00 when they travel to Lancaster, Pa., to take on Franklin and Marshall.



CAROLINE HORST ‘25 / PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY ‘27



AVA CONNOLLY ‘25 AND JENNA SROCKFEDER ‘25 /
PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY ‘27

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Men’s wrestling wins mentally and physically

By LEXI SIPOS
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Muhlenberg men’s wrestling began its debut for the 2023-24 season on Nov. 4, 2023. Since then, the Mules’ performances have been nothing short of outstanding. With a current total record of 9-2, they are showing the public what strength and talent the Muhlenberg wrestling program has. Head Coach Jason McLean set the team up for success, and his team’s attitude compliments their positive outcomes.

The team’s most recent wins against McDaniel on Jan. 20, Merchant Marine on Jan. 27 and Johns Hopkins on Jan. 27 display the team’s work ethic. In speaking with a few of the athletes, they emphasized team culture and hard work. Andrew Loniewski ‘27 commented, “I would describe this season as fun, but nonetheless a grind. Our success this season has been a result of hard work and dedication in the room. Our guys have been working hard all year for this, and we really want to prove ourselves.”

Ricky Caamano ‘24 recorded his first-period pins against Merchant Marine with Loniewski. Another noteworthy achievement of Loniewski was pin-

ning his opponent within the first minute at McDaniel giving Muhlenberg the lead.

Multiple standout individuals assisted Muhlenberg in their win at McDaniel. An athlete that completed the upset of the match was Paul Parise ‘25. He defeated the defending Centennial Conference champion, who is ranked seventh in all of Division III with a 12-8 win. He commented on how he stays composed saying, “For me and for the team, it proves that an opponent’s rank shouldn’t scare anyone away. The only way to make it out of a match like that is to stay calm, focused and do what you are good at in the match.” His mindset converges with his determination to produce wins like this. The future of the Mules not only shines bright, but athletes like Parise will leave a positive legacy for those after him to look up to.

Brian McCaw ‘25 is building off his strong win last year with first place at the Under Armour Invitational in 2023. At the McDaniel match, he won with a score of 10-1. In addition to his success, his motivation speaks volumes too. He said, “Our mindset going forward follows our team motto of ‘find a



CHRIS SOCKLER ‘25 / PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY ‘27

way’ where we’re just going out there looking to score points, be aggressive and find a way to win the match with whatever it takes.”

This type of mindset in the face of adversity is what transforms teams into champions. McCaw added, “This recent win was just a reminder to us and to everyone of how good this team really is on our best days taking out some tough competition like that gives us that extra confidence going into the rest

of our conference duals and the individual tournaments as well.” Their team’s confidence bleeds into individuals igniting success.

Ultimately, the team’s goals are unlimited. They collectively and individually strive for excellence. Most of all, by prioritizing their mental and physical well-being, they are able to create positive outcomes. Brian McCaw ‘25 explained their goals perfectly, “We have goals like winning conferences, winning

regions and qualifying as many weights for nationals as we can, but our main team goal for the season is really just to compete to the best of our ability and prove that we are a top 15 or even 10 team in the country.” We can confidently say that the Mules are hunting for victory this season. If you want to see the Mules in action, their upcoming match is at Muhlenberg on Thursday, Feb. 1 at 7 p.m.

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Spring is near and birdies are chirping

With a lot to look forward to, Muhlenberg’s men’s and women’s golf programs are ready to swing into action this spring.

By OLIVIA OBERMAN
SPORTS EDITOR

With a lot to look forward to, Muhlenberg’s men’s and women’s golf programs are ready to swing into action this spring.

The Muhlenberg women’s

golf team is represented by just two players, Kailyn Foss ‘25 and Carly Cramer ‘25. During their last tournament of the fall season, the Turtle Creek Intercollegiate hosted by Arcadia University, Kramer recorded four pars– three of them being in a

row. Foss recorded five pars and tied for tenth out of 30 competitors. While the women’s team may be small in numbers, they have proven to be strong on the course and composed of great chemistry. Foss adds, “While golf can be an individual sport, I’m most looking forward to golfing with my teammate Carly. We both are members of Alpha Chi Omega and I’m lucky to share these experiences alongside such a supportive individual.”

After a strong fall season, the athletes are setting goals for an even more competitive spring season. Foss specifically states, “I hope to be more consistent and keep a positive attitude throughout this season. I want to work on my short game and hitting the greens in regulation.”

Before both the men’s and women’s programs begin their regular spring season, they will take a memorable spring break trip. Aron Gianchandani ‘24 said, “We are very much looking forward to going back to Myrtle Beach, S.C., for our Spring Break trip. We will take this time to bond more as a team, get some time to prepare for our season, and have the opportunity to practice difficult shots that we may see during competitions.”

Following the trip, the women’s first season tournament will take place on Monday, Mar. 18 at the Lebanon Valley Invitational. The men’s first season tourna-

ment will take place at the McDaniel Spring Invitational– Saturday, Mar. 23-24.

Gianchandani gave insight into what the men’s side is hoping to accomplish this spring. “As in the fall, we are trying to play smart and make the decisions that we feel will benefit our game and that will lower our score. Another goal is to place in the top three in at least two of our tournaments and even get a win as a team against all of the other top-tier Division III schools. It would be very cool to win a tournament individually as this would show the effort put forth in the golf season. The golf program learned a lot of valuable lessons from the fall season. We took many chances during our rounds this past season which did not pay off, but we’re hoping to cash in during the upcoming season. We had one guy [Drew Hynes ‘24] shoot a career low in the fall and hope that others follow in his footsteps toward career lows.”

At the 2023 Lion’s Fall Invitational, the men’s program finished their fall season on a high note, placing fourth overall with standout performances from Alex McCauley ‘26, Gianchandani, Ryan Tasetano ‘27 and Charlie Kerprich ‘26.

Henry Stoer ‘24, who cut more than six strokes off his average going into the fall season, said, “Team chemistry is certainly high this season. We retained

almost all of our team from last year and the new recruits have fit in well. Our goals right now are to just improve on what we have been working on and play to our strengths and abilities when out on the course.”

In terms of goals, Stoer added, “I am looking forward to playing well in the conference tournament this year. This is my last year as a Muhlenberg golfer and I would like to play well in the tournament that means the most to the team.”

Gianahcandani spoke on some of those meaningful tournaments, “Another big event we have this spring is a match at Franklin & Marshall. There will be a lot of very good teams at this event and we want to do well. We are also very much excited for this year’s Conference Championship as both our men’s and women’s teams will compete on the same course during the same weekend. For the men’s team, it will be on the same course as it was last year where we had a great showing, so we are hoping to carry that momentum into this year’s tournament and improve upon it.”

With great team chemistry, talent, and energy, Muhlenberg’s golf programs are expected to obtain much success this spring season.



RYAN TASETANO ‘27 /
PHOTO BY ALEX MCCAULEY ‘26

Women’s basketball ready for playoff push

By EVAN SCHLOTTERBECK
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

The snow on the ground may have kept some outdoor-based teams from continuing their training or at least made them adjust their routines. However, the Muhlenberg women’s basketball team experienced no such impediments as they carried out the middle third of their season over the last month.

After starting the season strongly, taking down a preseason nationally-ranked DeSales squad, and winning the Westfield Gas and Electric Tip-Off Tournament, the team found their conference opponents a taller task. The team currently sits seventh in the Centennial Conference [CC] standings, with an in-conference record of 6-8 (11-8 overall) and six games remaining, all against CC foes. The good news, however, is that they are still very much alive in the playoff picture, and with several key victories down the stretch, they have the potential to find themselves occupying a top-four seed come the end of the regular season.

As of late, before defeating Washington College 66-54 on Saturday, Jan. 27, led by a stellar 27-point performance

by Point Guard Ava Connolly ‘25, the Mules split games with Ursinus and Dickinson, winning the former at home 56-36 and dropping the latter in Carlisle, Pa. 54-42. With those teams sitting at fourth and third respectively, winning one and losing one is not the end-all-be-all.

Abigail Scheidel ‘24 reflected on the performances. “I think that some of the things we did well in these games were following our scout,” said Scheidel. “We spent a lot of time going over team personnel before the game, and I think our defense against both teams was really good, but especially Ursinus. I think something to learn is to get the ball into the post more to get more opportunities for our forwards, but also to get better shots by getting the ball into the paint and looking for an inside-out play for our guards to have more open looks when the defense collapses.”

Unity has been a big theme for the squad throughout the entire season, and in moments like these last six games, it will play a large role in matchups come February. Shooting guard Rachel Saxton ‘25 commented on what the team has been working

on: “Throughout the season, I think one thing that has worked for us has been sticking to what we know best and running our offensive sets. The team’s attitude and confidence have been great this year, supporting each other and making sure we take the most open shots. In practice, we’ve focused on our defense, rebounding and communication, especially making sure as a team we move together both on offense and defense.”

The team has been gearing up for this final playoff push for weeks now, and the vibe around the Mules radiates competitive energy and a desire to execute. “I think that [this stretch] is a very crucial part of our season,” added Scheidel. “It all comes down to executing when the game is on the line. We need to be more sharp at the end of games to win in close game situations. Winning against [Washington College] definitely gave us an upper hand for playoff contention.”

Along with the on-court work the team has been putting in, an emphasis has also been placed on transparency amongst players and coaches, as well as

[SEE PLAYOFF PAGE 10](#)



Men’s basketball looks to keep their playoff spot

After a dominant win over Washington College on “Senior Day,” the men’s basketball team seeks to cap off the final stretch of their season strongly.

By DYLAN ROSENBLATT
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

If the Muhlenberg men’s basketball regular season wrapped up today, their in-conference record of 6-6 would set them up to make the Centennial Conference (CC) playoffs as the fifth seed.

With all six games left on the schedule being in-conference games, the team must finish strong down the stretch to be one of the top six teams in the standings and make the postseason. The two schools that could knock the Mules out of playoff contention, Dickinson College

and Ursinus College, both currently have an in-conference record of 5-7. It’s probable that, depending on how the final six games of the season go for these three teams, two of them will finish as the fifth and sixth seeds in the standings, and one team will miss the CC playoffs.

While it hasn’t been nearly as good of a season as the team had last year, if they win the majority of their final games, they’ll likely be in a similar position as they were last year come playoff time.

In the 2022-2023 season, the Mules finished with an overall record of 18-9 and were the third seed in the CC playoffs. In the first round, they hosted a play-

off game versus Ursinus College which they won by 21 points. The Mules then ended up losing against Johns Hopkins University in the semi-finals. It’s unlikely this season that the team will be able to snag the three or four seed in the standings and gain home-court advantage for the first round, however, making the playoffs is still feasible for them.

“We know our team has so much skill and can truly play with any team when we do the little things throughout the game,” said Drew Greene ‘26. “This includes communicating, boxing out and finishing possessions with rebounds, getting 50/50 balls, not turning the ball

over, and making simple plays. All of these actions are things we can control in a game because they really have nothing to do with skill and more with effort and focus. A lot of little things are mental but these are things that can win you a game. So overall, if we lock in on those little details we will give ourselves a great chance to make the playoffs.”

The team lost six seniors from their team last year, including All-American Point Guard Dan Gaines ‘23, so coming into this season they knew that if they wanted to be successful they were going to need the underclassmen to step up and play big

roles.

“Coming into this season I knew I was going to have an opportunity to prove myself and show what I can do to help our team succeed,” continued Greene. “I knew I had to come in ready to go and take the next step of being a playmaking guard for the team. Watching [Daniel] Gaines ‘23 and [Giovanni] Rubino ‘24 as a freshman was a huge learning experience for me and taught me a lot about how to be a composed, tough guard in our conference. There are many good guards in the CC but to be able to be in the presence, both on and off the court, of those


[SEE BASKETBALL PAGE 10](#)

Coming up this week in

SPORTS


Feb 1 - Feb 7

Men’s Wrestling




Thursday, Feb. 1 @ 7:00 p.m.
Memorial Hall

Track




Sat, Feb. 3
Collegeville, Pa.

Women’s Basketball



Sun, Feb. 6 @ 6:00 p.m.
Haverford, Pa

Men’s Basketball



Sun, Feb. 6 @ 8:00 p.m.
Haverford, Pa.



A faculty office in the Baker Center for the Arts stands empty.

Working more than just nine to five

A deep dive into work weeks on campus from faculty to staff and everything in between.

By JOHN VEGLIA
MANAGING EDITOR

Office spaces across campus do not tell the full story. While it may appear that some staff members are absent from their desk, they might be partaking in their work remotely or traveling for the College. The standard 9-5 work week is not a standard practice here at Muhlenberg.

“In my role as the Vice President for Advancement, no two

days or weeks look the same,” said Rebekkah Brown ‘99, who is also an adjunct professor of dance.

“A ‘typical’ week is Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. I would say that *most* weeks (as in, somewhat more than 50 percent of the weeks) are typical, but it’s also very common to have ‘atypical weeks,’” stated Associate Director of Alumni Affairs Tara Simpson ‘02.

Theatre & Dance Marketing &

Development Manager Scott Snyder stated, “I’m usually in the office more or less 9:00 to 5:30 or 6:00, and then I’ll go home and spend some time with my family, but then I’ll get my laptop out and pick back up in the evening and on the weekend, like right now.”

“I’m hard-pressed to describe a ‘typical work week’ as the work in the department is dynamic and no two weeks are alike. On weeks when I don’t have to

be present at tech rehearsals or meetings, my hours are usually 7:45 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.,” stated Director of Operations and Production for the Department of Theatre & Dance and Adjunct Professor Jessica Bien.

Director of Career Coaching & Education Caitlin Bach said, “The Career Center and its staff do follow the traditional 9-5 working hours, but we definitely fit in a lot during those hours.”

“I would say for the majority

of the year, we follow an 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. schedule, with occasional additional work in the evenings or on Saturdays depending on visit programming for prospective students and their families. However, we have a travel season in the fall, and a smaller travel season in the Spring, both of which do not follow such a straightforward schedule,” stated Admissions

SEE **WORK** PAGE 4

Trouble brewing for local coffee shop

Nowhere Coffee Co. has been blocked from opening a roastery.

By MATTHEW KLINGER
NEWS EDITOR

Since opening in February of 2022, Nowhere Coffee Co. on Tilghman Street has been a Muhlenberg favorite. From their delicious coffee, good bites and warm atmosphere, Nowhere Coffee Co. is the ideal place for students to study off campus. After the successes of their Allentown and Emmaus locations—with President Biden visiting the Emmaus location a month ago—Nowhere Coffee wanted to expand their operations by

opening a new roastery in Upper Macungie. The expansion process has been in place for some time, beginning with a search for a potential building. Nowhere Coffee Co. says that they “spent months looking at expansion places last year. In November, the stars aligned and one of our realtors listed the property at 115 Trexlertown Road. It was perfect for what we needed.”

One of the reasons that finding a building takes so long for new and expanding businesses is that there are regulations on what can and cannot be used at

a location. Those regulations are called zoning ordinances. According to Millman National Land Services, ordinances exist to ensure proper land use, provide value to citizens who own property, protect the local environment and keep property values stable. For Nowhere Coffee Co., this meant that they had to find a building that was zoned for food production, or else they would not be allowed to use it.

When the company first identified the property at 1115 Trexlertown Road, the building seemed to comply with the zon-

ing ordinances required to roast coffee. According to Nowhere Coffee Co., “It is zoned appropriately for what we are doing—Neighborhood Commercial. Our landlord is lovely and supportive of our business.” With everything seemingly in place for the opening of a new roastery, Nowhere Coffee Co. applied for a Business Use and Occupancy permit with Upper Macungie. Much to their surprise, however, the township denied their application, citing a zoning violation.

To add to the confusion, the township denied the application

because the building was zoned ineligible to be used for “food processing,” which according to Nowhere Coffee Co., is not a term even listed in the zoning code. Making matters worse, there are a number of different food-adjacent businesses that are allowed to be at the building. For example, bakeries are included in the zoning code for 115 Tilghman St. This is especially frustrating considering that both coffee roasting and baking apply high heat to change the

SEE **COFFEE** PAGE 2

Arts & Culture

Students reflect on performance opportunities on campus.
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Campus Voices

Musings on the Disney bubble.
PAGE 9

Sports

Men’s wrestling aims for success.
PAGE 12

THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY

Serving the Muhlenberg College Community since 1883

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The Muhlenberg Weekly strives for accuracy in reporting and writing, but we acknowledge that mistakes happen. Readers are invited to submit corrections about errors in articles, and they should be submitted to weeklyeditor@gmail.com. Corrections are also brought to our staff’s attention by our own editors and writers. Our staff will review the suggested correction, consult with the author of the article, and issue the appropriate correction. Online corrections are located at the bottom of the article. Print corrections are located within the paper, on the page indicated in the online edition. However, The Weekly does not grant take-down requests for articles.

ADVERTISING POLICY

We request that advertising material be submitted by the Monday preceding publication at 5 p.m. If materials have not been received at that time, the advertisement will not run and the advertiser is still responsible for 100% payment. We reserve the right to decline any advertisement that is misleading, inaccurate, fraudulent, or deemed generally unacceptable. This determination will be made by the Business Staff in consultation with the Editor-in-Chief. The Muhlenberg Weekly maintains a distinction between its news & editorial content and advertising. As such, advertisements will not be accepted if they imitate the general style of The Weekly, intentionally or unintentionally. Examples of this include, but are not limited to: headlines, bylines, fonts, and column-arrangements. In order to make this distinction, The Weekly also reserves the right to include the word “advertisement” on any advertisement that is deemed too native.

CAMPUS SAFETY NOTES

1/16/24
Fraud—Report of fraud and threats via online communication, referred to outside agency.

Individuals later identified and spoken to.

1/27/24
Noise Complaint—Report of noise complaint on Gordon Street. Resident spoken to, no further incident.

1/29/24
Injured Student—Report of injured student on Albright Street. MCEMS responded, individual refused further treatment of transport.

Vandalism—Report of vandalism in Walz Hall, writing found on whiteboard. Individuals later identified.

Injured Student—Report of injured student in the LSC. MCEMS responded, individual refused further treatment of transport.

1/28/24
Theft—Report of attempted theft of food in Seegers Union.

CONGRATULATIONS to the Muhlenberg professors who received tenure. They are:

Jacqueline (Jacki) Antonovich Ph.D., History
Ross Dardani Ph.D., Political Science
Emanuela Kucik Ph.D., English and Africana Studies
Casey James Miller Ph.D., Anthropology
Ellen Rackas, Accounting
Leticia Robles-Moreno Ph.D, Theatre and Dance

FROM COFFEE PAGE 1
physical quality of the food.

This denial comes after Nowhere Coffee Co. had already begun the process of renovating the space to fit their business needs. Just this week, the company accepted delivery of their brand new Giesen coffee roaster. Those roasters are incredibly expensive, costing around \$35,000 if not more. In the meantime, Nowhere Coffee Co. has stated that they will be moving the roaster to a location in Allentown while they figure out how to move forward with the 1115 Trexlertown Road location.

Mayor Matt Turek even said, “We got you in @allentowncity-pa. Just come see us and we will get the ball rolling in the right direction.”

The company is allowed to appeal the decision, and they have decided to follow through with an appeal. The appeal does not come cheap, though, costing \$800. As of now, the date of the zoning appeal hearing has been scheduled for Mar. 13, a full “51 days into their 60 allowed time-frame” to hear the appeal. Furthermore, the delay comes at a “critical time in our business’ growth,” the company has stated.



PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY '27.

Customers order at Nowhere Coffee Co. on Tilghman Street.

With little information as to why their permit was rejected, Nowhere Coffee Co. is finding it difficult to prepare for their upcoming hearing. They have

regularly been posting updates about the process on their Instagram page @nowherecoffeeco in hopes of raising awareness about their situation. In the

meantime, for those wanting to support Nowhere Coffee Co., they said that the best way to support them is to continue buying coffee, getting gift cards for

friends and spreading the word about their coffee shop.

Take your professor to lunch

By ADDISON STAR
STAFF WRITER

The Provost’s office has announced the creation and launch of a new program, “Take Your Professor to Lunch,” for the spring semester. Through this program, students have the opportunity to invite their professors to lunch at the Wood Dining Commons. The purpose of this program is to allow students and faculty to engage in casual conversations while taking advantage of the dining services on campus.

All students are eligible to participate in this program but are limited to two meals a semester. All faculty are able to participate once they sign up, and are limited to three meals a semester with different students. According to the Provost’s office, at least 60 professors have already registered for the program with more doing so every day. If a professor has not yet signed up for the program they can do so at any time, barring a 48-hour grace period for their ID card to get activated.

The organization of these lunches will be at the discretion of both faculty and students. Students are encouraged to invite their professors to lunch, working within the confines of both parties’ schedules.

Before swiping in, students need to inform the person working the Wood Dining Commons

desk that they are taking their professor to lunch and their professor will use their ID card to swipe in. The Provost’s office will be covering meals for the faculty while student’s meal plans will be charged as usual. A concern brought up to the Provost by The Weekly was students who may have limited meal swipes a week or commuter students who don’t have meal plans.

Provost Laura Furge, Ph.D., said that students experiencing financial hardship who are concerned about their ability to participate in this program should email the Provost’s office to come up with a solution. The coverage of the faculty’s meals will come out of discretionary funds “that can be used to build community on campus,” said Furge.

Spurred by faculty interest to have more opportunities to gather with students, the hope of this program is to facilitate informal interactions between faculty and students; benefiting the Muhlenberg academic community. The ability to engage in these meetings will allow students and faculty to connect on a level that isn’t limited by the formal classroom setting. This, in turn, translates to a more productive academic setting. Furge hopes that this environment will “bring us together and also help us learn across difference.”

She also noted that it is important for members of a community to be in conversation

with one another saying, “You can’t do hard things, you can’t talk about hard things if you haven’t made some effort to get to know the person.”

Paige Majewski ‘24, expressed her concerns about the efficacy of the program, saying, “As someone who pays for a smaller dining plan that requires me to budget my swipes to only four swipes a week, I find it a bit unfair that students are expected to use their swipes for this experience while salaried professors are entering the dining hall for free. If they want to promote this program, which could ultimately be beneficial, I think it would be much more reasonable for the school to offer both the student and the professor free entrance into the dining hall.”

Vivian Jaber ‘24, also shared her reservations about the program. “While I do like that idea, I think it’s very problematic and inconsiderate. Majority of commuter students including myself don’t have a meal plan, so when I hear about this new plan, the first thing I think of is ‘oh, so that doesn’t take me into consideration’ which is sadly much like any other plan or event on campus. I think it’s a very great opportunity and initiative to build your network and connect with professors on a deeper level, but it’s not inclusive of commuters. I think in the case where the college wants to implement this, they should consider commuter students and perhaps give them

PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY ‘27.



Students eat and study at the Wood Dining Commons.

a free pass of going in with the professors.”

In addition to the academic community, Furge believes that the “Take Your Professor to Lunch” program will benefit the Muhlenberg community as a whole because “by increasing informal conversations we hope to create spaces for discussions on multiple topics, such as potential opportunities at Muhlenberg and beyond, [while] learn[ing] about faculty careers, shared research interests, strategies for work/life alignment and more. At the same time, it is a way for faculty to learn more about what students value and what students are curious about beyond their classes. And, as [not-

ed] above, strengthening the community benefits the entire community.” Having the ability to see another side of both professors and students, “We think this is one of the advantages of choosing Muhlenberg—to be able to come together and share ideas and perspectives between our talented students and faculty over some delicious food,” said Furge.

The “Take Your Professor to Lunch” program is active and the Provost’s office is encouraging students to reach out to both their favorite professors and ones that they want to get to know better to arrange lunch.

SGA evolves

By ALEXANDRA DOWNEY
STAFF WRITER

On Wednesday, Jan. 31, Muhlenberg’s Student Government Association (SGA) held a meeting that established four new clubs and a new bylaw that will secure first-year involvement on the council.

During the first two to three weeks of fall semester, SGA plans on holding an election that would be specific to first-years. Instead of removing two current representatives to make space, two seats have been added, increasing SGA membership from 23 to 25. The votes to increase the number of SGA seats and to include first-years were separate, and because the minimum number of people required to make a vote is based on percentages and not a specific number, this change does not alter general proceedings.

Josephine Glass ‘27, one of two first-year representatives on SGA shared her thoughts, saying, “Freshmen representation in SGA is crucial because it ensures that every individual on campus, regardless of their class year, has a voice in the decision-making processes that impact their college experience. This newly introduced bylaw is a significant step towards inclusivity, guaranteeing that the concerns and perspectives of freshmen are taken

into account. The presence of freshmen in the SGA will have a positive impact on the future of the organization by allowing a fresh perspective and fostering a more dynamic and representative student government.”

SGA Vice President Andrew Buckwalter ‘24 also advised incoming first-years to “Come in with big ideas! If you experienced something in high school and think Muhlenberg would benefit, suggest it! If you see something you don’t like, try to change it! Be loud and unafraid to make mistakes and learn from them. Also, if you are not elected in your first campaign, please run again! There will always be more elections and more seats up to be filled. Many current members, including our current president, were not elected their first time running.”

Buckwalter also stressed the financial implications of the new bylaw vote, saying, “I believe this is important because first-years represent about one fourth of the student body and for an entire semester they had no representation on SGA. Part of SGA’s responsibility is to oversee the dispersal of the student activities fee which every student has to pay. By not having a voice in this process, it is effectively taxation without representation.”

In addition to passing the new bylaws, SGA also ap-

proved four clubs: Young Poets Society, Muhlenberg’s The Improv Club (TIC), fiBERG Arts and BergImmersive, which all touch on different artistic outlets. Young Poets Society aims to erase some of the stigma around poetry, specifically through creating a free and safe space where writers don’t feel pressured to share their work aloud. Weekly meetings will involve discussing poets and their poetry and providing prompts for writers to use as inspiration. The club plans to collaborate with other organizations across campus and events like poetry speed dating and anonymous poetry night are currently in the making.

Muhlenberg’s TIC is throwing their hat into the improv ring, creating a safe environment on campus where auditions are not necessary to enjoy improv games and activities. TIC currently has a program with en-ACT, and hopes to differentiate themselves from other improv groups by stressing that no auditions are necessary to join.

fiBERG Arts noticed the campus trend of crocheting and knitting and wanted to create a space where newcomers and pros alike can come together to create. Newbies can come to learn how to knit and/or crochet, and entrepreneurs can utilize the space to help their business.

BergImmersive is an

emerging immersive theater company, hoping to continue the success of their fall semester production, “Love in Idleness.” Because of the positive support from the community, they hope to continue putting together productions with rotating casts and crews each semester. Focusing on classical adaptations of theater, BergImmersive is intent on ensuring the safety of both their actors and audience by appointing an intimacy coordinator for every produc-

tion. In terms of overlap with the Muhlenberg Theatre Association, BergImmersive plans to implement similar policies wherein students cannot overbook themselves. The club also hopes to provide a space where students who have not had the opportunity to be involved in other campus productions have the ability to participate in theater.

PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY ‘27.



SGA’s Campus Engagement Committee meets on Feb. 6.

FROM **WORK** PAGE 1

Counselor Emily Kapelsohn.

BROWN continued, “This position requires me to be in many meetings on campus with members of the community (faculty, staff and students), and I also travel frequently to meet with alumni, parents and friends of the College who are engaging with and making philanthropic gifts to the College.”

“For example, during one week this fall, I was on campus on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday for a variety of meetings and teaching Tap II on Monday and Wednesday,” Brown stated as she is also an adjunct professor of dance. “I headed to the airport right after class on Wednesday to fly to North Carolina and spent the rest of the week traveling throughout North and South Carolina with President Harring to meet with alumni and donors to the College, soliciting gifts for the Boundless campaign, while taking virtual meetings with people back on campus as well.”

To accommodate for teaching tap two, Brown has to utilize her time usually set for a lunch break on Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:30-1:50 p.m. “The dance department is gracious enough to work with my schedule so I’m not missing critical meeting times in my VP for Advancement role. The times and days for teaching aren’t always the same each semester, but I usually teach 2 days a week over lunchtime which means my responsibilities as the VP for Advancement can be fully met.”

SIMPSON shared, “The average number of hours I’ve worked during [the week leading up to

alumni weekend] is 88. This is ‘just part of the job’ for Alumni Weekend, and it’s normal for that week to be preceded by more weeks of longer-than-normal hours, but that’s the only time of year that we work such extreme hours. You basically just know that you’re going to be working constantly for a while, you clear your calendar and say goodbye to your friends and family until it’s over. But there are always lots of snacks!”

The office space at Muhlenberg is also nontraditional because of the opportunity to work remotely, a lingering result of the pandemic. Brown works remotely one to two days of the week, and Simpson’s entire work week is flexible beyond any concrete commitments. “If we need to go to a personal appointment, run an errand, have a family obligation, etc., we can generally make adjustments to accommodate for that. If there’s snow or ice, we can work at home. I value this flexibility very strongly and it’s one of the things I most appreciate about working for Muhlenberg...You really need to plan ahead and block your calendar and be prepared to work around those commitments.”

SNYDER may not work in the office during the traditional office hours, but he is always available online.

“All together, I’ll typically put in 50 or 60 hours a week — less during down time, like December and June, more when it’s crunch time and there’s a lot going on, or I’ve got a deadline.”

Snyder does not necessarily have strict remote days, but he does have flexible opportunities to be remote if he is sick or his

schedule allows for it.

“My schedule follows the production calendar to some extent of course — playbills go to press and ads run and photo calls happen according to the show schedule. But my work is more spread out, and we’re often working pretty far ahead — that’s certainly the goal. I don’t have the same crunch time that other members of the production staff have, where you’ve got access to a performance space for, like, three days, and you’ve got to get all the work done in those three days.”

BIEN, self-described as “the hub of the big department wheel,” is also an adjunct professor to teach accessibility in the arts and stage management courses in addition to her production title.

“Two weeks or so out of every month (though for February it’s three weeks), we’ll have a department show ‘in tech.’ This is when all of the technical elements (the set, lights, sound, costumes, etc.) are added to the production and we rehearse onstage...During tech and dress rehearsals, I typically work 7:45 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. and then 6:30 p.m.- 11:30 p.m. weekdays and then there’s usually a Saturday rehearsal from 11:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.,” Bien continued. “I try really hard to preserve (at least) Sunday off from all tech and dress rehearsals for everyone involved...There’s no one else in the department that manages or mentors the things that I do, and all the rest of the staff are managing their own large workloads and priorities. To be honest, I teach my students about the importance of boundaries in

their work, but I often struggle to maintain them myself.”

BACH, who was promoted this past fall to Director of Career Coaching & Education, engages with students across campus in various areas with different workshops, appointments and other activities. “There is definitely no such thing as a ‘Normal Week’ in the Career Center, but I think that’s what I love so much about being there! In any given week, I could be meeting with students individually, presenting in different classes, meeting with other campus offices & faculty or planning & implementing different events or trips off campus.”

Bach has the option to work remote one day a week, though this does come with some challenges since Bach mainly focuses on workshops that require interaction with students. “It can be difficult in my role to be remote as so much of my work is visiting classes, hosting workshops, taking trips, meeting with students and running activities. I am very fortunate that I have the opportunity to do that. Other positions might allow for more remote time, but I am in this role because I like engaging with all the different people across campus, so I enjoy having just one day to be remote.”

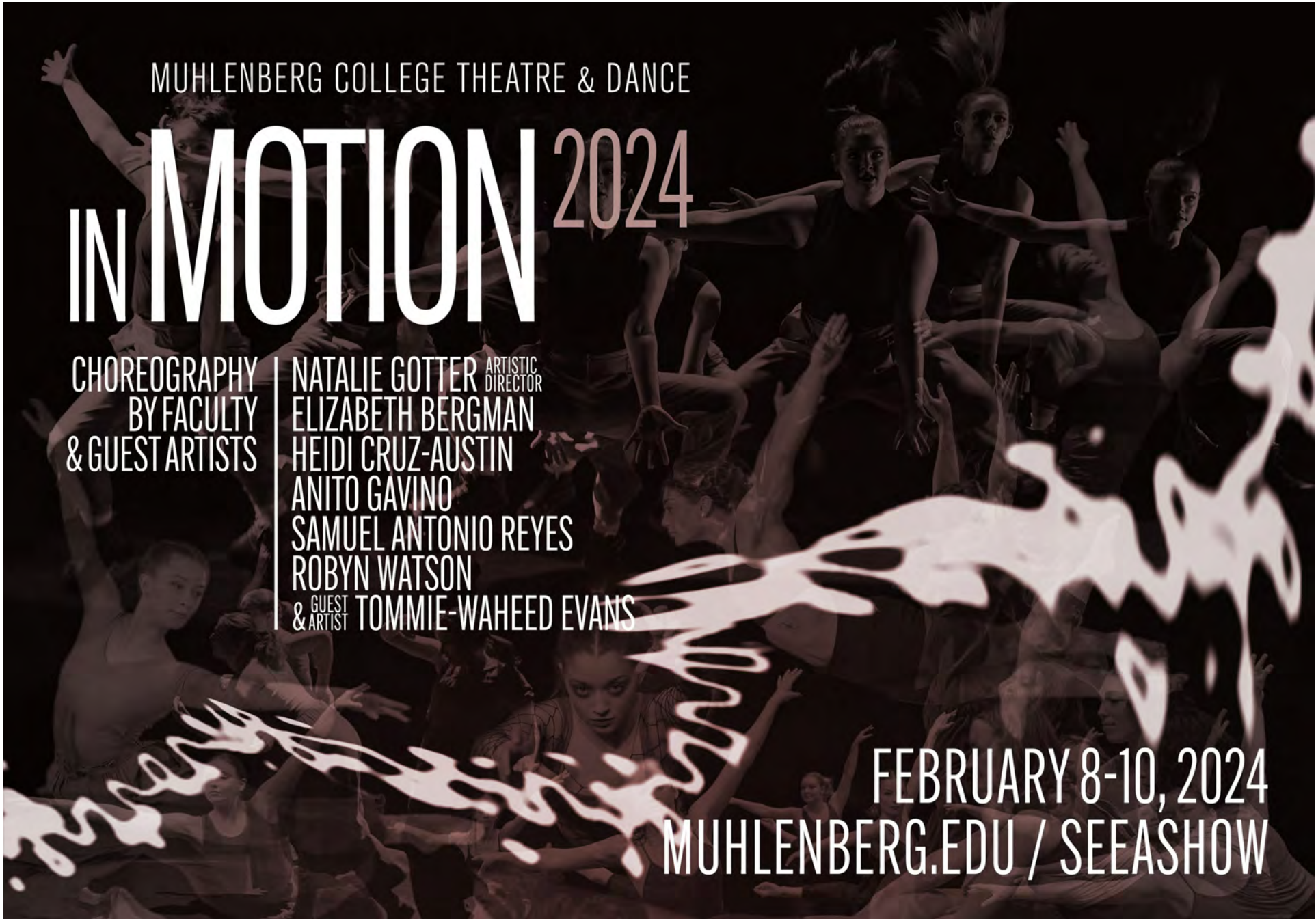
KAPELSOHN also oversees the tour guide program in addition to her counselor position and might not be regularly found sitting at her desk in her office. “My schedule while recruiting for the College during travel season is not quite as predictable, as there is a lot of variability. I would say that most commonly, from September through the start of

November, my schedule consists of three to five high school visits during the day, catching up on work and performing virtual interviews during the late afternoon, and then a college fair most evenings. My travel territory is Northern New Jersey, so this can also consist of staying in the territory during the week if needed.”

Kapelsohn has no remote possibilities, as her job is spent engaging with prospective students and families while also managing the student employees who make up the tour guide program. “Admissions is an extremely cyclical field; the day-to-day work varies throughout the year but always follows the same pattern. This impacts the ‘typical’ work week a good bit.”

All of these positions operate with different schedules, highlighting how the work week looks different for everyone. Flexible work hours and schedules may seem to break the mold, but to what extent?

Brown concluded, “It isn’t easy to manage and fulfill the expectations of each of these roles, and I hold myself to very high standards of success, but thoughtful planning, strong commitment and the ability to be nimble allows me to do them both successfully, and it ultimately makes me more effective in each of these roles.”



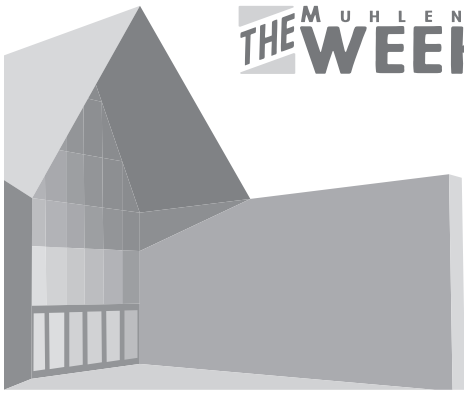
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The casting conversation

Casting opportunities in theatre is a topic on the minds of students.

By SHINAM HUSSAIN
ARTS AND CULTURE EDITOR

Muhlenberg has recently been ranked as #2 on the Best College Theatre list in the Princeton Review, a category determined by student rating of campus production quality. Muhlenberg markets its theatre program as a haven of opportunity for aspiring performers, with promises of an extensive education coupled with collaborative experiences that enhance a performer’s scope of their chosen art. Of course, this is the marketing towards those intending to dedicate their educational journey at Muhlenberg to a major in theatre. Muhlenberg depends on its

theatre program, and preserving the idea that opportunities at Muhlenberg are rich and constant. Students and families of students have held conflicting views on how much opportunity is fostered for students interested in theatre at the College. This past year, parents had taken to expressing their concerns about what they deemed a lack of opportunity to the Provost of the College. Students have expressed their own disappointment with how difficult it is to get cast in theatre productions, and how the difficulty in casting coupled with what seems like little opportunity, is leaving them disillusioned with the theatre department. This stands as an

issue the student body is divided on, with some rallying for more opportunities to be provided for those interested in theatre, and others defending the opportunities offered, citing that opportunities are there, it’s just a matter of taking them. Anna Item ‘25 provided insight on the matter stating, “A lot of people discount or forget opportunities like New Play Reading Series (NPRS) and the Red Door Play Festival when considering acting roles available across a semester. NPRS, Red Doors, Muhlenberg Theatre Association (MTA) Studios, departmental productions and now BergImmersive all combine to create many opportunities for performers at ‘Berg. I do think

that we should all consider representing actors with different skills: different identities, different vocal ranges (we especially need more love for altos and baritones/basses), vocal styles (both legit/classical and contemporary/belt), acting styles (comedic and dramatic, classical and contemporary) and dance styles when we produce musicals.” A large issue students and parents alike call attention to in terms of casting opportunity is how there have been the same names being seen in cast lists. Rachelle Montilus ‘24 voiced her thoughts on the matter, saying, “There are opportunities on campus. But I think it’s also difficult because, just because there

are opportunities out there, students shouldn’t be forced to take advantage of those if they don’t feel it’s for them. The MTA could do a bunch of shows, and the department could do a bunch of shows, but if it doesn’t cater to the demographic of the students and what the students want, then what do those opportunities mean?” “Casting is so strange because there is always that first level of favoritism. [It’s a] double-edged sword because for sure I believe professors have the right to work with students they know to be reliable and have seen their talents in class. I think they should feel empowered to do

[SEE CASTING PAGE 8](#)

Artist spotlight: Katrina Binks ‘24

By EMMA HOWSON
STAFF WRITER

Many dancers start honing their craft from a very young age. Katrina Binks ‘24 had a bit of a belated start, but she’s made the most of it. “In high school, I used to choreograph my friends for fun at parties and help out with the school musicals... My freshman year I decided to create a piece for DanceWorks on Zoom, and from then [until] my junior year, [I] was heavily zoned into honing my improvisation, which ultimately furthered this growing passion to choreograph.” Junior year of high school proved pivotal for Binks. It was when she began expanding her dance vocabulary. “...[A]fter just being a house/hip hop dancer for a couple [of] years, I decided to start involving myself in other styles like contemporary, ballet and jazz which ultimately ended up heavily influencing my choreographic aesthetic.” She continued to explore her artistic potential when she came to Muhlenberg, and she’s grateful for the many opportunities that the college experience has afforded her. “Some of the projects I have been involved with at Muhlenberg have been ‘Reset: New Dances’ (as both a dancer and choreographer), ‘In Motion,’ ‘Miss You Like Hell,’ ‘Head Over Heels,’ ‘Dance Works’ and I spent a semester studying at the Accademia dell’Arte in Arezzo, Italy.” Studying in Arezzo was particularly important in Binks’

artistic journey. “When I went abroad, I decided to create my first staged work and that’s when I really fell deeply in love with the practice of not just performing but creating my own personal tangible work. That is really when I started to take it seriously, which led me to choreograph for the Earl Mosley Summer Intensive and for ‘Reset: New Dances’ last fall.” “One of my favorite [experiences] would have to be choreographing for ‘Reset,’ because that was just an unparalleled experience in my college career that was so incredibly special and formative in relation to how I have grown as an artist. I was so lucky to be able to work with such a smart and beautifully talented cast, as they gave me the avenue to not only create something but learn a lot about myself and what I love to do... having an amazing production team to work with let me make my dreams and concepts tangible and real, which is a beautiful thing to witness. [Having] something out there that I am so proud of and can look back at with such fondness and love makes me feel truly grateful for that opportunity.” A unique aspect of the college experience is the relationships that one forms with their professors. When asked what professors have impacted her the most, Binks said, “Those who immediately come to mind would be Heidi Cruz Austin, Robyn Watson, Natalie Gotter and Samuel Reyes. These amazingly talented teachers have real-

ly supported me throughout my entire dance and artistic career. Not only have they been there to give me great creative feedback, but they have extended so much generosity [and] kindness to me outside of the studio that I never would have ever expected coming to college. They are a huge part of the reason why I feel confident enough to pursue a career in dance and performance. I don’t think I will ever be able to thank them enough for both the amazing opportunities they have given me, and also for the consistent push to strive to work harder and put all of my love into what I do.” But it hasn’t always been an idyllic journey for Binks. Junior year of high school was pivotal for another reason. “I tore both of my quads at the same time during a tech rehearsal for a show I was in. It was absolutely devastating, but it helped me realize that dance and (I would soon realize) choreography were things that I could not live without. I went through rigorous physical therapy in order to dance as much as I could at a summer intensive I got accepted into at the time, which was honestly so mentally and physically taxing.” In some ways, however, this injury and recovery period was a blessing in disguise that continues to help her even to this day. “In hindsight, I learned so much from that process and have taken lessons from that experience into my work today. I grew in terms of my work ethic in the way that, if I was not in



PHOTO BY MADDIE CILIENTO ‘25

Katrina Binks ‘24 has performed in several productions during her time at Muhlenberg, including “In Motion” and “Head Over Heels.”

the studio dancing, [I learned] what I was doing outside of that productively impacted my dance training. If I couldn’t move my legs, then how could I maintain strength and precision in my arms?... As I watched my peers dance, I became very attuned to specificity in quality and its ability to portray a story. How are the dancers staying together to create a unified concept and when were moments that dropped and why? I think that from this experience I gained a lot of natural choreographic knowledge and a

further appreciation for what I love and what my peers love to do!” In addition to dance, Binks expresses her creativity in many mediums. “I am heavily involved in theatre and (in my own time) studio art! I have always been attracted to other modes of performance and this has really helped me in terms of my development in creating stories within my choreography. For example, in my piece ‘Red Ros-

[SEE BINKS PAGE 7](#)

Dining services offers special menus

Muhlenberg's dining services celebrate traditions and holidays throughout the Spring semester.

BY SAMANTHA BROOKS
STAFF WRITER

PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY '27.

The Spring semester will be a busy one filled with several holidays and events. Because of this, Muhlenberg's dining services are celebrating Black History Month, Mardi Gras and Lunar New Year with themed food. In addition, there are also special menu items for the Latin American Film Festival, General's Carvery and Heart Health Awareness.

On their Instagram @berg-dining, Dining Services says that they will celebrate Black History Month in partnership with the Office of Multicultural Life with two delicious meals spread out through February starting with Feb. 1. Dining Services has also teamed up with the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures during their Latin American Film Festival next month. Each film showing will correspond with a meal in the Wood Dining Commons inspired by the country in which the film takes place. For Mardi Gras, Dining Services will host their annual Mardi Gras celebration in the Wood Dining Commons during lunch on Feb. 13. Students can celebrate Lunar New Year during Dinner on Feb. 8 with homemade dumplings made by student volunteers. The first General's Carvery will be on Feb. 14 during lunch outside of the General's Quarters (GQ), which will feature house-smoked pulled pork.

For the Latin American Film Festival, Dining Services has collaborated with the Department of Languages, Literatures & Cultures to create authentic menus from each of the countries featured in the film festival. Sous Chef Ivan Martinez researched and compiled amazing menus that reflected the cultures of the various countries. For Black History Month, members of the culinary staff of African descent have been invited to create menus that highlight the foods they enjoy at home or growing up. This year, Noshery Lead Cook, Montrel Mansel, served a meal of baked macaroni and cheese, smoked turkey, collard greens, cornbread and barbecued ribs. Later in the month, Chef de Partie Malynda Mason will be serving shrimp and grits, parmesan green beans and scallion biscuits. Next week in celebration of Mardi Gras, the Food Gallery will see a large variety of special additions for lunch, including oyster po boys at Wild-Fire Grille, muffalata sandwiches and shrimp gumbo at Chew Street Deli, chicken and andouille jambalaya, fried green tomatoes and benoits at Chef's Table. Executive Chef Michael Brack says, "The Cooks on our team do this work because they love what they do. Muhlenberg College offers a venue that encourages innovation and creativity, when we have an opportunity to learn a new dish or present a different



The salad bar at the Wood Dining Commons.

offering everyone wants to be involved. The excitement and appreciation of our customers drives our passion and enthusiasm."

General's Carvery was first held about six or seven years ago, but it was not held for a period of time due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Fortunately, this event resumed last year. Operations Manager Peter Stark expressed, "We wanted to offer something different and unique to our GQ clientele, be it faculty, staff or students. We offered the Carvery two to three times a semester. We would either set up a carving station outside the entrance to the GQ or utilize the Mobile Mule in Parent's Plaza during nicer weather. We house-smoke various cuts of meat, hand carve them to order and offer a variety of sides to compliment the sandwich. It offers a change of pace for our customers, and for us as well!" On Feb. 14, Dining Services will offer a pulled pork sandwich on a pretzel bun and a vegan smoked jackfruit sandwich, and before spring break, there will be a corned beef special.

Evan Young '27 says, "I love

how everyone's culture is represented. It really coincides with Muhlenberg's ideals of community. It makes everyone feel included and like they are a part of the community."

Each month of the semester, Campus Dietitian Tori Martinez MS, RDN, LDN, hosts a wellness event for the campus community. The themes vary monthly, so there is always new information to learn. Because February is Heart Health Month, Martinez explains that "This wellness event will focus on heart-healthy diet and lifestyle practices. I enjoy the educational aspect of my events because knowledge allows us to make informed decisions for our lives. Wellness events are an excellent opportunity to learn about a nutrition/wellness topic and speak with me if there are any questions." Students will have the opportunity to attend the next wellness event, which will be held on Thursday, Feb. 15 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Seegers Union front lobby tables. There will be an informational handout and a sampling of chocolate hummus with fruit dippers. Future event dates are Wednesday, Mar. 20,

Thursday, Apr. 25 and Wednesday, May 1.

Gabrielle Brayman '27 says, "Having a variety of foods this month in the dining hall is a great idea. It showcases the diversity that we have at Muhlenberg. Trying these different cuisines opens up our eyes to many cultures and their unique backgrounds. This furthers the goal of inclusion here on campus."

The Lunar New Year Dumpling Fest is a long tradition of gathering faculty, staff and students on campus to gather on an evening and prepare the dumplings for the Lunar New Year Dinner held in the Wood Dining Commons. To manage this large scale event, Thomas Janis from the International Studies Office, Red Door Catering and the Wood Dining Commons team all collaborate to bring the volunteers, free up a kitchen, make the dumplings and execute the celebration dinner. Red Door Catering Director Jenell Butz explains, "This is an annual event that we in dining services are thrilled to be a part of every year. It's always nice to see new students participate but it's even more rewarding to have the veteran

dumpling makers join us from their freshman to senior year!" She also adds that, "If a student group or organization is looking to organize any type of event, planning is key and the Red Door Catering team is able to [provide] support with any questions or guidance needed. If you are a group or organization interested in planning an event please contact the Red Door Catering team at catering@muhlenberg.edu or come visit us in the Student Life Suite, Room 85c!"

Coming up in March, there will be the Spring Awakening Dinner in collaboration with the student group, Plant Based Advocates on the 19th. Then on the 20th there will be a St. Patrick's Day Dinner and on the 28th, also a student collaboration, Ukrainian Cuisine-inspired meal. In recognition of Arabic Appreciation Month, the Dining Services will also feature a special meal (menu and date TBD). The end of the semester will be celebrated with Finals Carnival Food Night.

MESA hosts Palestinian film night

By SHAIYAN FEISAL
ARTS AND CULTURE EDITOR

On Feb. 2 the Middle Eastern Student Association (MESA) hosted a Palestinian movie night along with serving food from local Allentown Halal restaurant Crispy Spice at the Red Doors. MESA is a new student group that was approved by SGA in the fall 2023 semester. The film they screened was “Operation (Open) Bethlehem” which is a documentary in which Director Leila Sansour combines archival footage of the city of Bethlehem in Palestine along with her own personal video journal to doc-

ument the building of an illegal wall dividing Palestinian and Israeli areas. Sansour’s original goal was to make a film about her childhood city, but she ended up staying to honor the memories of her late father who founded Bethlehem University. Eventually, she realized that she must shed light on the plight of her city. Lujane Alkhmos ‘27, secretary of MESA summarized the film, saying, “[it’s] a documentary film about Leila Sansour returning to her hometown, Bethlehem, Palestine, soon to be enclosed by a wall. As she documents her journey throughout the city, Leila decides to begin a campaign

to save her city through themes of identity and unity. Sansour hopes to keep her city’s spirit alive and open the world’s eyes to the beauty of her hometown. Through interviews with politicians, activists and Palestinian citizens, Sansour sheds light on the hardships of everyday life under Israeli occupation, while also highlighting the resistance and resilience of the Palestinian people.” Alkhmos mentioned why it’s important to highlight the voices of Palestine at this time. She said “Palestinians have been occupied for decades and have long been dehumanized by the rest of the world. Because of

how long the ongoing genocide and ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians has been going on, people have become desensitized to the current genocide in Gaza unfolding right in front of our eyes. The Palestinian people have been crying out to the world for ages and continued to be ignored, but now that Gaza is finally in the news headlines, it is important to shed light on Palestinian voices now more than ever. Giving a voice to the people who have lived through oppression and apartheid their entire lives is absolutely critical.

There is nobody who can better speak on and advocate for Palestine better than the Palestinian people themselves.” MESA has lots of plans for the upcoming semester. They are currently planning a jewelry fundraiser to raise money for Palestine. They are also preparing for general meetings to teach dabke, which is a traditional Middle Eastern folk circle and line dance and intend on throwing a big, campus-wide event. Make sure to check out their Instagram @bergmesa to stay updated with future events.

FROM **BINKS** PAGE 5
es For You....’ from ‘Reset,’ a large part of my choreographic process was having my dancers find artworks that, to them, portrayed what my dance meant... I would use these as springboards for inspiration and would create movements that reflected similar textures and themes of the drawings and/or paintings.” “Furthermore, my interest in theatre has led me to pursue more complicated narratives within my work with multifaceted and 3-dimensional characters that really hold weight and presence on stage. So in all, it has really led my choreography to not just display dance as a physical art form but as something that really connects an encompassment of a real human experience.” Perhaps because of her sheer

passion for creation, Binks is not taking it easy her senior year. She’s using her last semester to work on quite a few projects. “This week I will be dancing in the ‘In Motion’ concert which I am incredibly excited about! After [that], my choreography from ‘Reset: New Dances’ will be performed at the American College Dance Association Conference. In April, I will be performing in ‘Head Over Heels’ as the dance captain/ensemble, and in May, the ‘Studio Sessions’ concert. Furthermore, I am a co-choreographer at Cedar Crest College whose department show will be put up in April!” Binks is ready to enter the wider artistic community after graduation. She said “I will be attending the Paris Summer Academy to study Contemporary and Physical Theatre. As well, I have potential opportunities to show

my choreographic work at artistic conferences! My plan, in addition, includes a lot of auditioning for shows, dance companies and freelance commercial industry work!” She has some advice for other artists, which is particularly pertinent to many Muhlenberg overachievers, “There is a difference between taking every opportunity and overextending yourself. Do everything that you can without taking on too much, and if you have to let go of something, choose to keep what makes you feel the most fulfilled and happy. Involve yourself in projects that give you that passion and driven feeling.” You can see Binks in “In Motion” this weekend, Feb. 8-10 in the Empie Theatre.

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FROM **CASTING** PAGE 5

that. When you trust your cast, I think it always puts you in a better position to succeed. So that's already something that changes things completely," Montilus continued.

While there are people frustrated with what seems like a lack of opportunity, others are echoing the idea that opportunity is at every corner, it is up to the students to make the most of them.

Charlotte Alexander '25 reasoned, "I believe there are a good amount of opportunities here at Muhlenberg. There is almost always an opportunity for students to get involved with something theatrical based, be it from a mainstage or Red Door production, to a new play reading, to a student showcase. I feel like it has really picked up, especially with regard to student-run performances."

"I'm on the Season Selection Committee, and one of our major goals is to choose shows with large casts to create as many opportunities as possible. We are also trying to vary the season with plays, musicals and classical works, focusing on female-led productions," Item said. "We also want to make sure that there are plenty of roles for female-identifying and trans/nonbinary performers since our performer base skews heavily in that direction. Much of the Theatre & Dance Department's limitations are due to larger administrative, budget-related things. We would love to do 15 shows a year or something, but we don't have the faculty, spaces or money to do so!"

The idea that casting in theatre prioritizes certain identities over others is prevalent in the minds of students when castings are released, with one anonymous YikYak user posting, "Wish I was a white man :(Shit is so easy."

Regarding the discussion around casting and opportunity at Muhlenberg, a topic that is pulled to the forefront of many minds is how Muhlenberg empowers marginalized identities in the performing arts.



power marginalized identities in the performing arts.

Montilus said, "I think that Muhlenberg is fighting a small battle with casting that I believe is actually a larger battle. I think the theatre department sees their casting issue as not enough students of color wanting to be in shows. And so, when the theatre department wants to do shows that are 'diverse' they can't do them, because their definition of diversity is a show that calls for 'x' amount of people of color. It's hard for them, I guess, to understand that diversity can look like many things and be many things. So instead of really putting on shows that tell diverse stories, I feel that the theatre department has a habit of forcing their performers of color to tell these stories for them."

Item added, "The theatre department has had a pattern of selecting shows which tell traumatic stories of racial violence, asking the same small pool of BI-POC actors to re-enact racial violence and grappling with their identities onstage over and over. One of the focuses of the Season Selection Committee for next year's season is to choose productions with roles that do not exploit student identities."

When deciding what shows to produce, and therefore what casting will look like for those shows, the department seems to lose sight of what is productive and what the student body feels they can actually benefit from. In paving the road with good intentions, the impact proves to be more harmful than helpful.

Students perform "The Labyrinth of Desire" in Sept. 2023. "I think they're trying every year to improve their lineup. But I think that casting is an issue because the theatre department needs a diverse actor base, but they don't wanna do the work to actually cultivate that actor base," Montilus continued.

Conversations surrounding casting opportunities revolve around the shows and productions the department chooses to produce. On show selection, Bird Palermo '25 said, "I personally am interested in musical theatre works that are newer and done less frequently, because as a playwright and composer, I want to support others who are creating in my field. I am interested in musicals that push the boundaries of what musical theatre can be. I would love to see more of this anywhere on campus. How-

ever, I am glad that the department doesn't just put on the most common or recognizable plays and musicals. I have seen a lot of great theatre I would not have known about otherwise."

With a theatre program that the College relies on and markets so heavily, there are many conversations to be brought to the forefront in an effort to push Muhlenberg Theatre to provide students with the opportunities they feel they were promised.

Montilus reflected, "Muhlenberg sells you this dream of cultivating your skills as a performer, but then they don't guarantee you any opportunities to perform. Give these people their money's worth. They need to make someone's degree worth it."

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Sing sweet nightingale

By JOHN VEGLIA
MANAGING EDITOR

The iconic “Cinderella” (1950) features a gorgeous sequence in which Cinderella floats among the bubbles beautifully singing “Sing Sweet Nightingale.” Cinderella’s voice drones out her stepsisters who are shattering glass in the background and making the ears of Lucifer the cat bleed. During this moment, Cinderella enters a new dimension with her angelic voice and the playful, yet fragile, bubbles around her shimmering in purple, red and blue hues. She even harmonizes with herself. It’s a simple scene, but a scene that would prove to be a close comparison to the attitudes of some Disney adults today.

I am a Disney adult, and proud one, but I believe that some fans allow for this company or obsession to drown them in these bubbles. In fact, it allows for their view of the world to become a Disney fairytale when, in reality, it is the exact opposite. This view is known as the “Disney Bubble.” Just like Cinderella, some Disney fans find themselves blocking out the awful noises around them to transcend

into this ethereal and surreal place. The Disney Bubble even allowed for the NBA to play basketball back in 2020. This was organized by the NBA to keep players safe and help control the spread of COVID-19 while keeping players and games on Walt Disney World property.

This idea of the bubble really stood out to me when I was talking to my aunt about Disney; yes, I guess you could say the Disney fandom is genetic. She mentioned how she is excited for an upcoming trip because she gets to just exist in her Disney Bubble, far away from the real world around her. Now, I think it is okay to take a mental health break from the news that dominates our social media platforms, however, this break turns into more than just that with Disney. These trips require intense preparation, research, tips from vlogs/blogs and more to make sure it is as magical as possible. The Disney Bubble no longer just operates within the location of the Disney resort that one is visiting, but it encapsulates the mind as well.

One key element of these vacations is the dining. Disney dining is on another level, and

if you wish to get the perfect restaurant experience or the Insta-worthy food, then you have to book these reservations 60 days in advance. The Disney Bubble is no longer a far-away reality, but it is right on your computer. This then builds excitement and turns this escape into an unhealthy obsession.

The Disney Bubble also allows for any critiques of the parks to be seen as villainous. The idea of being critical of one of the wealthiest companies in the entire world is not taken seriously because of some people’s unwillingness to look beyond the Bubble. Some of this negativity can definitely be unwarranted, but most of it is from people who want the Disney experience to improve. The pixie dust-tinted glasses allow for these problems and issues to be overlooked, but at what expense? While some Disney adults may be critical of their current operations, these adults still utilize these systems because of how the Disney Bubble has developed. No longer is it possible to enjoy the parks with the current crowds and popularity. The villainous roots of crowds, lines, capacity issues can only be defeated by the mythical

Genie+, the new and paid version of Fastpass+. It’s a double-edged sword because you want to enjoy your vacation, but you also give in to these overpriced elements that used to be complementary.

Disney adults who live in Florida, California and other locations close to the magic can experience this bubble on a daily basis. The bubble is no longer a dream away for a vacation, but right in their backyard. The experiences then become part of their daily routine and their understanding of sociocultural and political events. The separation between one’s own reality and this Disney Bubble even then becomes more complicated and confusing.

A recent study by LendingTree actually found that 18 percent of Disney families that visit the parks have gone into debt for these vacations. The other significant factor is that 71 percent of these attendees claim to have no regrets about the decision and are glad that they could visit the Disney theme parks. With park tickets averaging at \$140 per day, it makes sense as to why this has become our reality.

Disney continues to dominate the theme park industry, though

they are lacking in concrete ideals and concepts for their parks and resorts. Disney continues to highlight the possibilities for their theme parks, such as “Indiana Jones” in Animal Kingdom or “Coco,” “Encanto” and villains in Magic Kingdom, without confirming any of it. It’s all just ideas, existing in the imagination of Walt Disney Imagineers. With the promise of these projects that keep changing, it may seem that Disney is trapped in their own bubble and unwilling to see the growing competition down the street from Universal and other companies. When this bubble pops, who knows what may be in store for all of us.

Disney adults can be wonderful people and their joy about these Disney projects and experiences is a blast, but we cannot allow for one company to dominate our lives. We can like Disney while also being critical of their actions, political ideologies, prices and more. Just like Lucifer the cat in the “Cinderella” sequence, we need to pop the bubble while still allowing for that magic to remain, in whatever way that may mean.

It’s A Different Type Of Desert Here In Topeka

By RYAN STEREMBERG
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

“We’re in a new type of desert”,
Said the soldier with a rifle on his shoulder.
The crinkles of his shirt, covered with dust from the earth.
Libyan soldiers in Topeka, the government said we need ‘em, to show how the world can change.

“If there are US troops in Libya, why can’t the reverse be the same”, a young man asked. His thought was cast, to the politicians. They asked the elites, the elites they feared, of this thought that had appeared, and they said “Hey that’s a good idea”.

“Come on men arise, we are ordered from our countryside,”

The brave men, ready to fight and die, asked their commander why?

“The US has been so kind, to pay for us to fly, through the star filled light”.

So they leave their families and home behind, to march towards a different time.

So here we stand today, in a country far away. Our rifles pastel gray, we number fourty to eight, as we looked to the sky.

Snowstorm

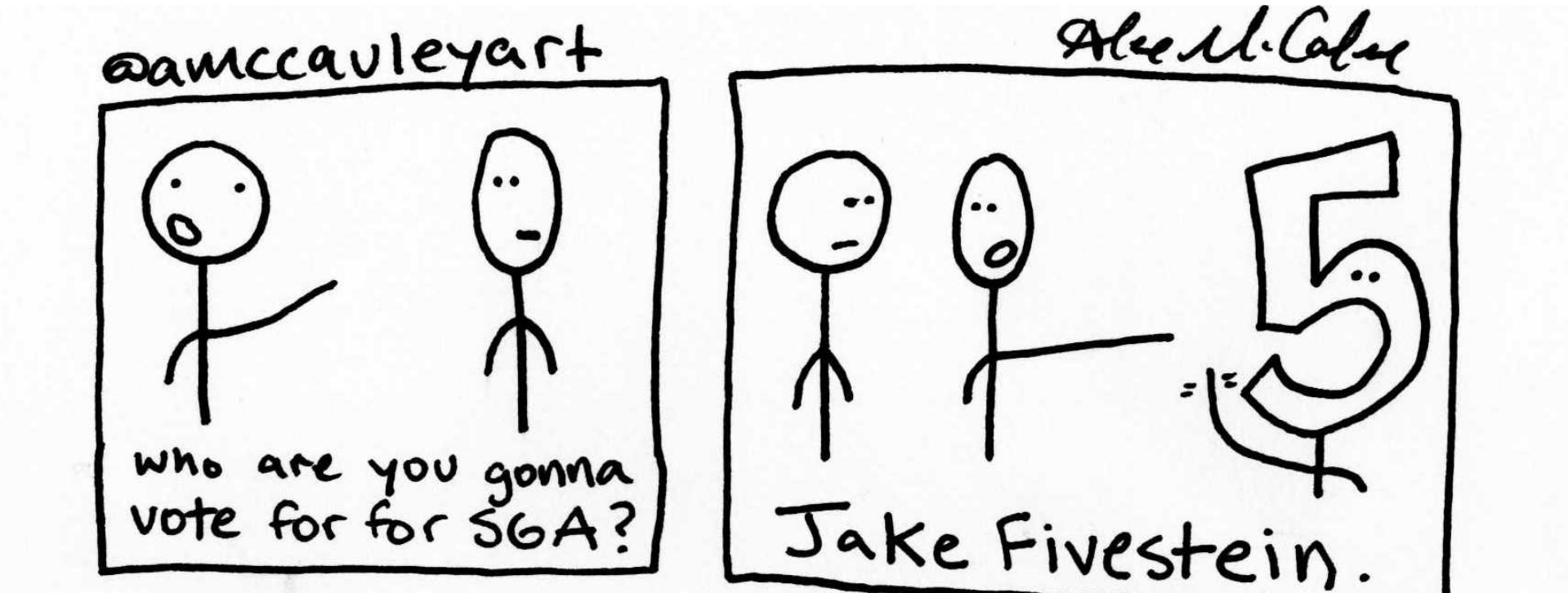
By ILAN HAAS
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

come winter does return to unmade each division —
landscape whitewashed to pathless and grid
lines undermined to uniting in harsh gusts in maybe

gentle crystals — what can release footsteps from follow
the ontrodden saltways / from buildings of edges all rounded
under wind-licks in dance-drift to dirt gone soft-grounded

beneath million-pound stormclouds in balance on precarious —
into avalanche into flurryfall into gusts into swirls into
mouth-steaming turbulence gone formless so unendable /

while wind with whipped snowfroth from topsy snowdrift sleepcloth
spreads salt-torn in covers to earth muddy slumber
through old cradle dreams under lullaby thunder.



Hoopin’ with their hearts

PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY ‘27



Rachel Saxton ‘25 plays Swarthmore in Memorial Hall on Jan. 31.

BY NOAH BERGER
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

The Muhlenberg women’s basketball team had a busy week, with games against Swarthmore and Franklin & Marshall (F&M). Although the Mules defeated F&M and fell to Swarthmore, the team played with all their energy in both matchups.

Caroline Horst ‘24 touched upon the strategy the team had for both of their games. Horst said, “We prepared for both games by scouting the offensive sets of Swarthmore and F&M. I think during the Swarthmore game there were points where we struggled offensively and dug ourselves into a deeper hole by forcing shots and passes that were not open. During F&M we played better together in sticking to what we do best and saw a lot more success.”

Their first game was against Swarthmore and while the game did not go the way they wanted, they know how to improve. Rachel Saxton ‘25 said, “The Swarthmore game did not go in our favor and I think a lot of that had to do with the fact that we weren’t executing on offense or hitting our shots. But, that is the game of basketball.” Despite the game not resulting in a win, the Mules knew what they had to do to get a win next time.

After the Swarthmore game, it was back to Memorial Hall to go up against Franklin & Marshall. Emily Unger ‘25 said, “Our game against Swarthmore definitely didn’t go as we hoped it would and I think we were all frustrated after. I think this really showed in our next game against Franklin & Marshall. We knew what we needed to work on, we came into the game ready to play, and we executed. I’m definitely proud that we were able to look past our game versus Swarthmore; we used it to get better and as motivation in our game versus Franklin & Marshall. One of the things that needs to be worked on as a team is our consistency, and maintaining that urgency in

all our games.” The win against Franklin & Marshall was a big factor for the Mules as they are pushing toward the end of their season. Saxton talked about the strategies for both of the games and how it affected the team’s performance. She said, “Our strategies for each game we play include offensive execution, defensive awareness and communication, and focus and energy. I believe every game we achieve these goals and we’re such a close team that when things go wrong, we have each other’s backs.”

The Mules are looking forward to the playoff push. Ava Connolly ‘25 talked about what it means to be in the hunt for the playoffs. She said, “The team is looking good for the playoffs. If we win the next three out of four games, we should have a spot. What will separate us from the rest is just staying disciplined and not letting ourselves fall into bad habits. There have been many games where, when things are not going our way it creates a chain reaction and brings the whole team down. We have to be able to take the hits but keep pushing towards our goals no matter what just happened.”

Rachel Saxton also touched upon what it means to be in the playoff hunt. Saxton said, “The team is definitely focused and we’re looking for a playoff spot. The next few games are big in terms of getting into playoffs and seeding but I have a lot of faith in this team and my teammates and I think the goal right now is to go game by game and do what we do best which is play Muhlenberg basketball.”

The Mules are well-positioned to continue their push into the playoffs, as the remainder of their games are approaching. Unger said, “We all know how important these next few games are, and we know what we need to do to win. This is what we have been working towards all season, we just need to play together and execute.”

Track and field keeps carrying the pace

BY CAITLIN KINNEAR
STAFF WRITER

The Muhlenberg men’s and women’s track and field teams have started their season off strong with personal records (PR), team records, and first-place finishes as they prepare for future meets. The team began their season back on Dec. 2 at Lehigh University and has since been training and building strength as the season progresses. Being a little over halfway through the season, the Mules have seen much success in the eight meets they’ve competed in so far, and are keeping their mindsets positive moving for-

ward. One of the women’s team captains, Faith Fezenko ‘24, reflects on the team and the season, “We have a very talented team this year that is more dedicated than we have seen in previous years. So far, I think even if some individuals, including myself, are not where we want to be yet, we are still on track for a successful indoor season.” Through the ups and downs that a track season brings, the team has been able to keep a confident outlook as the season progresses and as the Conference Championship meet approaches. This kind of mindset has helped lead to strong performances, such as those seen

in last Friday’s track meet. On Friday, Feb. 2, the men’s and women’s track teams traveled to compete in the NYC DIII Invitational at the Armory and were met with many positive results. One of the men’s team’s captains, Charles Ohanian ‘24 said, “We had a great meet at the Armory on Friday! The highlights were the hurdlers, with Sam [McDonough ‘24] breaking the 60-meter hurdles school record and Maya [Richwine ‘27] winning the 60-meter hurdles, improving her #2 all-time Muhlenberg mark. Maya also ran the second fastest indoor 200-meter time in school history.” In addition to Richwine’s

first-place finish in the 60m hurdles and her third-place finish in the 200, other top ten finishes at the Armory include Shira Gamson ‘26 (5th) and Shanice Williams ‘26 (7th) in the triple jump, David Seel ‘27 (4th) in the 800, Chris Short ‘27 (6th) in the 400, Michael Powel ‘26 (5th) in the shot put and Dylan DeMagistris ‘24 (5th) in the weight throw. This meet not only revealed the team to be in great shape, but it also offered them the chance to compete in an extremely high-energy and motivating environment that they do not get the chance to compete in each week. Fezenko said, “The Armory provides an experience

that not many other meets do. The schools that attend this meet are very competitive and it provides a bonding experience for our team. It is a supportive atmosphere like no other, not only between our teams but between other teams there as well.” Support and competitiveness continued the following day at a different meet as other members of the team traveled to Collegeville, Pa. to compete in the Frank Colden Invitational at Ursinus College on Saturday, Feb. 3. At this meet, the top ten

FROM **TRACK** PAGE 10
performances on the team consisted of Natasha Furyk '25 (4th) in the 5000, Paola Navarro '25 (7th) in the 60m hurdles, Jaden Snow '27 (6th) in the 1,000 and (7th) in the 60m hurdles, and

Sebastian Montalvo '27 (8th) in the 3,000.
After strong marks this weekend, the track and field team hopes to keep this momentum going into the rest of the season, especially into the indoor Conference Championship meet and

eventually into the outdoor season. When considering goals for what is to come for Muhlenberg track and field, Ohanian said, "We are looking to place higher than last year in both the indoor and outdoor conference meets. On the men's side, our big goal is

to finish top three at the outdoor conference meet and to send a couple [of] athletes to nationals."
The Mules plan to move closer to these goals with each meet, including next week at Ocean Breeze. This Friday, Feb. 9,

Muhlenberg track & field travels to Staten Island to compete at the Fasttrack National Invite, setting out to see more first-place finishes and broken school records on the road to reach this season's goals.

PHOTO BY MUHLENBERG COLLEGE ATHLETICS



Track and field competes in the John Deitrich Field House on Jan. 26

Muhlenberg women's lacrosse team poised for another strong season

By LUCY ATWOOD
STAFF WRITER

The Muhlenberg women's lacrosse team geared up on Feb. 1 as they took on their first official practice. Looking ahead to this season, the team is poised for another strong season. The Mules have a talented roster that is led by four experienced seniors who have a deep understanding of the game. They are supported by upperclassmen and underclassmen who are hungry to prove themselves and make their mark on the team.
The team has been preparing and working hard all fall semester to start strong with a new season on the way. "The off-season training was somewhat unique because this past fall, all juniors were abroad. The seniors and sophomores were able to work closely with and get to know the incoming freshmen and develop the team camaraderie we will need to have a successful season. We have a great freshman class, not just as lacrosse players but also as people and now friends. Now that the juniors are back and we have begun to practice together, you can see the team beginning to come together and gel," said Attack Nicole Steiner '24, who is excited to have the whole team back together with players returning from abroad.
The Mules made it to the Centennial Conference playoffs last year and are working towards accomplishing that again. Defensive Midfielder Elisabeth Loiselle '24 said, "We are excited about this season! Last year, we

made it to the Centennial Conference playoffs, and while we were so happy to [have] reached that accomplishment, we still have a bitter taste in our mouths after being defeated at Haverford. We are determined to do whatever it takes to get back into the playoffs and make it one step further than we did last year."
The team has shown remarkable dedication and commitment by putting in tremendous effort during the off-season to enhance their skills and strengthen team cohesion. Their hard work and perseverance have paid off, and they are now better equipped to tackle any challenges that lie ahead. "There is so much new talent on our team with so much potential, and we have been putting in the work at practices. As a senior, I am excited to see the team grow throughout the season," said Attack Jordyn Kushel '24.
Graduating seven outstanding seniors last year, the Mules are thrilled to embrace ten new freshmen to contribute fresh talent and energy to the team. Loiselle says that one of the team's main goals is to "build a good culture on and off the field. We graduated seven seniors, all of whom were huge contributors to our team's success, and now, we have welcomed ten amazing freshmen. We are really taking every practice to work as hard as possible and get to know each other's styles on the field so we can work together in a way that compliments each other's play to produce the utmost success."
The team looks forward to



PHOTO BY MUHLENBERG COLLEGE ATHLETICS

Women's Lacrosse practices on Varsity Field

working together to help each other develop and grow stronger as individuals and as a team. Attack Lillian Seifert '24 is eager to see the team make it further than last year. Seifert said, "For this season, our team is looking into becoming the most intense, close-knit and hardworking team we can be. We hope to achieve a goal not only to make it to the conference playoffs but to make it farther into [the] playoffs than we did last year!"
The Mules kick off their season with a home opener scrimmage against Georgian Court on Saturday, Feb. 10, at noon on Varsity Field. Steiner expressed

her excitement. She said, "I am excited about our upcoming scrimmage because it will give us an opportunity to see where we stand in our team development. Although practicing against each other is fun and challenging, you want to go against someone else. Even though it is early when I look at our team, I think we have the talent and personality to do special things on the field this year."
The women's lacrosse team is excited about this week's scrimmage and the chance to show off the hard work they put in both on and off the field during the

off-season. "This scrimmage is a great opportunity to see the way in which our team meshes in a game environment, especially amongst our freshmen and juniors who haven't gotten the opportunity to play together yet as the juniors were abroad in the fall," Seifert said. "I have high hopes for this weekend and that we will come out not only successful but with important things to work on as our season gets closer!"
The team is hungry to find their way back to the Centennial Conference playoffs.

Wrestling shows their character

PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY '27



Ryan Fairchild '26 faces off against Ursinus on Feb 1.

By PENELOPE SCHNEIDER
STAFF WRITER

In the heart of Muhlenberg, a remarkable season of resilience, determination and unwavering spirit unfolds on the wrestling mat geared towards the end. The Muhlenberg wrestling team has faced opponents and conquered challenges, showcasing the true essence of sportsmanship and dedication.

The Muhlenberg wrestling team’s journey has been nothing short of inspiring. The team comprises young athletes with a passion for wrestling and a determination to succeed despite the odds. The team’s journey is a testament to the power of hard work, dedication and perseverance. They have shown that with the right mindset, anything is possible.

Recently, the Mules participated in their final dual match

against Ursinus, intending to win the Centennial Conference dual championship. Although the Mules put in a valiant effort, they unfortunately fell short of their goal. Nevertheless, the team’s spirit remained unbroken, and they showed remarkable resilience and determination.

The match saw two standout wrestlers emerge as beacons of inspiration. Ryan Fairchild ‘26, ranked fourth in the Mideast Region, faced a formidable opponent ranked third in the region with a season record of 27-4. Fairchild showed incredible skill and determination, securing a dramatic takedown in sudden victory. His victory is a testament to the indomitable spirit that defines the Mules.

Fairchild emphasizes continuing the high effort. His remarks state, “We are focused as we head into this post-season.

We are ready to go, as we have already worked to reach this point. Our training will take us to gold.” The grind never stops; the future is bright, and there’s much to look forward to.

In addition to Fairchild’s triumph, Joey Lamparelli ‘24, Frank DiEsso ‘25 and Andrew Loniewski ‘27’s victories at the three lightest weights showed the team’s collective strength. Loniewski, an unranked first-year, triumphed against the eighth-ranked opponent in the region, proving that rankings pale compared to raw talent and tenacity.

The Mules cemented their place as warriors on the wrestling mat at Lycoming’s Rennie Rodarmel Allstate Invitational. Ricky Caamano ‘24’s pinning spree earned him the 133-pound title, marking his second career tournament victory. Caamano’s tenacity and skill set a standard

for his teammates.

Caamano reflected on his last season as a strong one. He said, “The team’s job is never fully finished. Looking into the future, we still need to get as many conference champs as possible and then get as many guys to nationals as possible. The team is full of talent, and we seem to be peaking at the right time.” Muhlenberg wrestling is nothing short of future success, and the team’s aspirations are attainable.

Furthering aspirations, Fletcher Goodman ‘25’s journey to the final at 184 and Keshon Davila ‘24’s impressive return to competition showcased the depth of talent within the Muhlenberg wrestling squad. Jaziah Moore ‘27’s debut, marked by a come-from-behind pin, symbolized the infusion of new energy and potential for future triumphs.

The Muhlenberg wrestling team transcends wins and losses, with a prevalent narrative of overcoming adversity, challenging the odds and embodying the true spirit of sport. Their journey inspires not just within the confines of the wrestling mat but resonates as a symbol of work ethic for the entire Muhlenberg community. These young athletes have demonstrated that anything is possible with the right mindset.

Coming up this week in

SPORTS

Feb 8 - Feb 14

Men’s Wrestling

MUHLENBERG

at

CENTENNIAL CONFERENCE

Sat, Feb. 10 @ 10:00 a.m.
Westminster, Md.

Men’s Basketball

MUHLENBERG

vs

MCDANIEL

Sat, Feb. 10 @ 2:00 p.m.
Memorial Hall

Mens’s Basketball

MUHLENBERG

vs

URSINUS

Wed, Feb. 14 @ 6:00 p.m.
Memorial Hall

Women’s Basketball

MUHLENBERG

vs

BRYN MAWR

Wed, Feb. 14 @ 8:00 p.m.
Memorial Hall



Victor's Lament on the College Green is blanketed by nearly 10 inches of snow on Feb. 13.

Commuters brave the storms

Impacts of snow on commuter students

By AMY SWARTZ
NEWS EDITOR

With Muhlenberg calling a campus-wide snow day this past Tuesday, and the potential for more snow and ice in the upcoming weeks, concerns are being raised about the safety of commuter students in events of inclement weather.

The College has comprehensive guidelines in the case of weather-related emergencies. This includes their Inclement Weather Policy, and their Snow and Ice Management Policy. Though the phrase “campus community” is mentioned multiple times throughout the two documents, there is no language that specifically considers commuter students.

With rates of students who commute lying just above the five percent mark, they make up the minority of students on campus, as the other roughly 95 percent live in Muhlenberg-owned housing. Further, Muhlenberg’s campus is small, and all students who live on campus easily have access without having to drive.

When asked if she believes that the administration accurately takes commuter students’ needs into consideration in cases of inclement weather, Khadijah Chaudry ‘26 expressed her thoughts. “I don’t think that the administration accurately accounts for commuter students attending classes when it comes to inclement weather. From experience, it has been a bit more difficult this year with the amount of snow we’ve been getting and where school hasn’t been canceled for any days except for this past Tuesday. While there are definitely commuters who live nearby and don’t have to face a lot of problems getting to school when the weather and roads are in poor condition, I think the administration should take into consideration commuters and faculty members who live farther away,” said Chaudry.

Muhlenberg’s commuting policy allows for all students who live in a 30-mile radius of the College to be eligible to commute. This 30-mile radius spans well into New Jersey, and out west to Albright College. It

could take up to an hour to drive 30 miles, leaving commuter students having to decide if they feel safe driving long distances, on roads where they might be unsure of their safety.

Taking a look back at Jan. 16, the first day of classes this semester, there was a significant amount of snow on the ground. The College decided to open as usual, giving individual faculty members the domain to determine if they were going to hold their classes remotely.

Anam Ali ‘25 took a look back on that day. “On the first day of classes this semester, there was a significant amount of snow and ice on the ground. Though I’m not far from campus, all of my commute is through inside roads (no highways) and many streets weren’t plowed by the time I needed to get to my 9 a.m. lab. My car skid on numerous occasions on the way to campus. The worst part [was that] everything in the lab easily could have been done remotely or at a later time and I only spent one and a half hours on campus (when the lab is scheduled to be three hours).

I had a commute that was risky in the morning for just one and a half hours of being on campus, which was quite frustrating.”

Vivian Jaber ‘24 also reflected back to the first day of classes when asked if the administration properly takes into consideration the needs of commuter students. “I want to say no, but I also see it from their perspectives. Commuters make [up]

such a small percentage of students on campus, so canceling classes for 95 percent of students, if not more, is not ideal. Frankly, I think this is more of a faculty issue than administration. For example, we had snow on the first day of the semester and the college decided to remain open, however, some fac-

SEE SNOW PAGE 4

PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY '27.



Plant Operations shovels snow in front of the College Green on Feb. 13.

Arts & Culture

“In Motion” takes the stage for another year.
PAGE 5

Campus Voices

Editor-In-Chief Katherine Conlon ‘24 is over Taylor Swift.
PAGE 8

Sports

Women’s basketball celebrates their seniors.
PAGE 12

THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY

Serving the Muhlenberg College Community since 1883

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The Muhlenberg Weekly strives for accuracy in reporting and writing, but we acknowledge that mistakes happen. Readers are invited to submit corrections about errors in articles, and they should be submitted to weeklyeditor@gmail.com. Corrections are also brought to our staff’s attention by our own editors and writers. Our staff will review the suggested correction, consult with the author of the article, and issue the appropriate correction. Online corrections are located at the bottom of the article. Print corrections are located within the paper, on the page indicated in the online edition. However, The Weekly does not grant take-down requests for articles.

ADVERTISING POLICY

We request that advertising material be submitted by the Monday preceding publication at 5 p.m. If materials have not been received at that time, the advertisement will not run and the advertiser is still responsible for 100% payment. We reserve the right to decline any advertisement that is misleading, inaccurate, fraudulent, or deemed generally unacceptable. This determination will be made by the Business Staff in consultation with the Editor-in-Chief. The Muhlenberg Weekly maintains a distinction between its news & editorial content and advertising. As such, advertisements will not be accepted if they imitate the general style of The Weekly, intentionally or unintentionally. Examples of this include, but are not limited to: headlines, bylines, fonts, and column-arrangements. In order to make this distinction, The Weekly also reserves the right to include the word “advertisement” on any advertisement that is deemed too native.

CAMPUS SAFETY NOTES

1/30/24

Traffic—Report of hit and run to vehicle on Chew and 26th St. No suspects could be noted at this time.

1/31/24

Injured Student—Report of injured student in Shankweiler Building. MCEMS responded, individual refused further treatment or transport.

2/01/24

Injured Student—Report of injured student in Baker Center for the Arts. MCEMS responded, individual refused further treatment or transport.

Sick Student—Report of sick student in Walz Hall. MCEMS responded, AEMS responded and transported student to the hospital.

Sick Employee—Report of sick visitor in Seegers Union. MCEMS responded, individual refused further treatment or transport.

Disturbance—Report of individual smashing plates in the Village. Upon arrival no one was in the area, work order submitted to Plant Operations to clean up glass.

2/02/24

Injured Student—Report to transport injured student in the LSC to the hospital.

Noise complaint—Report of noise complaint on Gordon St. Upon arrival resident spoken to, no further incident.

Suspicious Activity—Report of suspicious activity at Parents Plaza. Individuals spoken to and left area.

2/04/24

Noise complaint—Report of noise complaint on Leh St. Upon arrival nothing could be noted.

Welfare Check—Report to check the welfare of a student in Prosser Hall.

Check out our Valentine's
Specials at Java Joe

Raspberry White Chocolate Mocha
Misty Hibiscus
Caramel Lover Macchiato

Available for a limited time!



It’s significant: Muhlenberg adds a new statistics major

By SARAH WEDEKING
MANAGING EDITOR

On Jan. 31, 2024, Muhlenberg announced that they were offering a new statistics major starting in the fall 2024 semester. The new major will be a collaboration between the Math and the Computer Science departments and is aimed at helping to prepare students for the fast-growing field of statistics. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the job market for statisticians is supposed to grow by 30 percent in the next decade, or 10,600 jobs, which is much higher than the average for all other professions.

Department Chair Byungchul Cha, Ph.D., said, “The demands for statisticians in the workforce have never been as strong as they are now.”

Muhlenberg previously only offered a minor in statistics. However, beginning in the fall of 2022, the College started the process of expanding it to a major. The major was officially approved in November and will be added to the catalog by the end of the year.

Associate Professor of Statistics Allison Davidson spearheaded the expansion. “The statistics major will not only prepare students with the statistical content knowledge,” Davidson said, “but

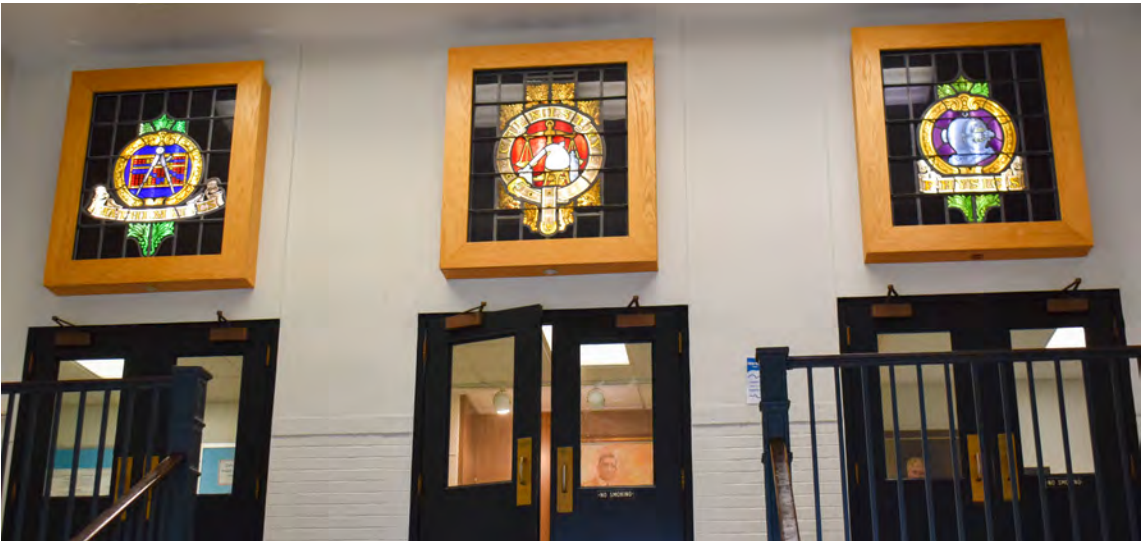
also the mathematical and computational foundations heavily used in the field.”

According to Associate Professor of Mathematics Michael Karcher, Ph.D., the process for doing so did not involve creating many new classes. There had already been several different statistics courses offered because of the preexisting minor, and the major expanded it to include foundational math classes, as well as a cognate course in computer science.

They also converted one class, Data Visualization, from a special topics course to a permanent course. There will be a total of 12 classes in the major, and both computer science and mathematics professors will be involved in teaching them. Only one course remains to be established, and that is the CUE. For now, students who wish to major in statistics will need to complete an independent study to satisfy the CUE.

The Mathematics Department will now have three majors: statistics, mathematics and computer science.

Karcher believes that the new statistics major will be beneficial both to the College and its students, saying, “Stats as a field is growing in popularity both in the workforce and as a field of research. Having the major will



The Mathematics Department, located in Trumbower Hall, is adding Statistics as a major.

allow students to more clearly communicate their field of study to potential employers or post-grad pursuits.”

“Statistics is an enabling discipline, having the benefit of being applied to a wide variety of different fields,” Davidson said. “Students that major in statistics have a number of avenues to pursue beyond graduation.”

Many students are thrilled about the new major. “I think it will be a great addition to the math department,” Amanda Rosten ‘25 said. “The statistics professors are all excellent teachers and people who will make the major enjoyable and productive for students.”

Computer Science Major Jay

Walker ‘25 said, “It is really great that Muhlenberg is adding this major, as so many fields that require a background in stats are growing at good rates.”

While many students are happy to have the stats major going forward, some upperclassmen wish it would have been around sooner. Paige Henderson ‘24 said, “I’m really excited to hear about the new stats major but I definitely wish it was around earlier... Being involved in the stats minor has been really great and if I knew this was an option earlier I would have considered it.”

Walker agreed, saying, “I personally feel like if they added [the major] sooner, maybe I

would’ve tried to do the major instead of just a stats minor.”

That being said, the professors are excited for this new curriculum. “I’m so excited for this opportunity,” Cha said. “Our stat majors will have easy access to math and [computer science], which will provide them with a mathematically rigorous foundation.” Cha also added that if any students have questions, they can reach out to him.

When asked what he would say to students considering the new major, Karcher’s message was simple: “Major in stats, it’s fun!”

Additional reporting by Matthew Klinger ‘24

Demystifying tenure

By MATTHEW KLINGER
NEWS EDITOR

Last week, Muhlenberg announced that they were awarding tenure to six professors: Ross Dardani, Ph.D., Jaqueline Antonovich, Ph.D., Emanuela Kucik, Ph.D., Casey James Miller, Ph.D., Ellen Rackas, MBA and CPA and Leticia Robles-Moreno, Ph.D.

While receiving tenure is a big accomplishment for faculty and important for the College, what exactly it means and what it entails is often a mystery to students. According to the Muhlenberg faculty handbook, “the awarding of tenure is the recognition of [professor’s] proven positive worth to the institution and the expression of faith in the long-term continuation of that worth.” In addition to being beneficial to the College in that it helps retain talented faculty, getting awarded tenure is also valuable to professors. Professors who are awarded tenure have job security that extends to retirement unless they engage in egregious misconduct.

Dardani of the Political Science Department shared that tenure is so important because it is “designed to allow you to pursue your teaching, and especially research, in any direction it may go, even if it may potentially go in a direction that is not all that

popular or goes against a majority of public thinking... [tenure] gives you the academic freedom to pursue your teaching and research interests without [the] influence of outside forces.”

Antonovich added to that, saying, “For those not familiar with how tenure works in academia, it might come as a surprise that not getting tenure means you’re basically out of a job.”

Getting awarded tenure is not an easy task. There are three factors necessary for evaluating professors for tenure according to the faculty handbook: “teaching, scholarship and service to the college.” To evaluate teaching, professors who are on the tenure track are observed in class by colleagues and college administrators. Professors’ syllabi are also evaluated for how clearly they communicate the learning goals for the course. In evaluating scholarship, performances are observed by the College if the professor’s field is in the performing arts. Otherwise, written scholarship is evaluated based on the prestige of the publisher or journal, as well as the quality of the work published. If the scholarship is presented at a conference, the presentation is evaluated on the quality of the content, as well as the prestige of the conference at which it was presented. Lastly, service to the

College is evaluated by attendance at College meetings, advising and mentoring students, leadership on committees, centers, departments and other similar roles.

Despite the difficult process of getting tenure, Muhlenberg has implemented a robust process for helping faculty successfully get tenure. All tenure-track faculty are given many opportunities to reflect and get meaningful feedback from colleagues to grow as teachers. One of the biggest ways this happens is through the third-year review, during which professors can hear from colleagues and administrators. This process provides professors with information both about their strengths, as well as the ways they can improve their tenure portfolios. This is crucial because it allows professors to adjust their teaching styles in a way that benefits the students, and it also helps them be prepared for their final tenure evaluations in their sixth year.

Discussing the tenure process, Rackas said, “Getting tenure is truly a six-year process. During that time, I learned a great deal about myself and the institution.”

Dardani agreed, saying, “I thought that the tenure process here was very transparent and offered so much opportunity to reflect at various points.”

Both Dardani and Rackas are excited to have tenure and are enthusiastic about the ways that it will help them be better professors. Rackas described how she is “very proud to have been awarded tenure. As a faculty member [who] switched careers late in my professional life, I feel a huge sense of accomplishment. I also hope that others see that you can switch gears at any time! Having tenure will allow me to pursue more research opportunities.”

Dardani echoed that idea, reflecting how “a lot of the research that I have been focusing on, it is fairly critical of the US, and having tenure definitely gives me a level of assurance that I am not going to be unjustly punished for potentially engaging in the research I have been pursuing, even it does focus on topics that are not popular.”

Miller shared both Rackas’ and Dardani’s sentiments, but he also noted that “getting tenure isn’t as much about how it benefits or helps an individual professor as much as what it means for them personally and professionally. Getting tenure is a huge personal and professional achievement, and is the result of decades of hard work, dedication and even sacrifice...[it] is a sign of recognition and respect by your peers.”

Kucik expanded on Miller’s

comments, saying, “As a Black woman, this milestone has layers of meaning for me. We live in a country in which Black communities were forcibly kept out of many educational spaces for so long, and I am immensely grateful to my ancestors for fighting for a world in which I, and many others, could reach this moment...There is still far to go to make academia a fully equitable space, so I am determined to use the privilege of tenure to open doors and break down barriers for all who will come after me, just as those who came before me did for me.”

Muhlenberg’s commitment to tenure stands out as, according to Antonovich, “tenure is under threat nationwide, [where] many states have begun to weaken or completely eliminate the tenure system.” Miller added on to that, saying “These days, [being a professor] is not a very certain [career path]—there are fewer and fewer tenure-track jobs in many if not most academic disciplines, so the outcome is far from certain.”

A committee amidst conflict

The committee will facilitate dialogue and education related to the war in Gaza.

By KABIR BURMAN
STAFF WRITER

“I think the College could have handled things differently, with more nuance, care and inclusion of all people being impacted by the devastating and ongoing conflict. The initial ways of addressing the conflict were upsettingly one-sided. Especially as a liberal arts institution, we have to know and practice our values,” explained Harli Strauss-Cohn ‘24. “Values that I think to be rooted in justice, equity, community care, openness to hearing perspectives that vary from your own and upholding human rights and dignity.”

These sentiments are by no means a lone voice, with the College facing internal criticism from faculty and students alike, who raise several points of discontent with the administration’s response to the war in Gaza. With additional external scrutiny now appearing in the form of pressure from parents, the alumni body and having recently been placed under investigation by the U.S. Department of Education’s (DOE) Office of Civil Rights (OCR) due to alleged allegations of discrimination on college campuses, the College is increasingly finding itself in a difficult position.

Then, in a campus-wide message via email on Jan. 29, the Dean of Students Office highlighted the administration’s response to this growing divide on campus. In the email, Dean Allison Williams went on to announce the establishment of a new ad hoc committee consisting of students and faculty alike. Referencing the College’s Mission Statement’s call for “reasoned and civil debate, understanding the diversity of the human experience, fostering ethical and civic values, and preparing for lives of leadership and service,” she went on to explain that “the goal of this committee is not to create new programming, but to create opportunities for faculty, staff and students to bring forward existing programming experiences surrounding this topic specifically, as well as



PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY '27

The committee aims to connect faculty across academic disciplines and backgrounds.

dialogue across differences more broadly.”

The email highlighted the faculty and staff chosen to be members of the committee, which included a wide range of representation from the English Department to the Religion Studies Department and the Office of Community Engagement. Yet, despite the inherently political and global reach of this particular conflict, notably absent from these names were any professors from the Political Science or International Studies departments. When asked about the decision to not invite them to the committee, the Dean and Provost’s Office explained that “since the role of this committee is not to lead these events, but to catalog what events we have, be sure the campus community is aware and suggest where we might strengthen/add programming, it is not essential that every academic area be represented.” Furthermore, “Political

Science has been working already with the Committee and the Provost’s office to offer numerous events related to this committee’s charge. The Provost has heard from many faculty across campus that are excited to contribute programming ideas and to lead by example,” said Williams.

Alongside Strauss-Cohn, the three other student representatives on the committee include Ian Graybill ‘26, Amina A. Akhrorkulova ‘27 and Sabeen Safi ‘26. When asked why she chose to apply to be a committee member, Strauss-Cohn explained that it was “because this sort of work and openness to conversation is integral to the world-building I believe in and want to be a part of. For me to just sit and be frustrated, confused, and conflicted by the events happening both in our world and on our campus doesn’t really do anything for me. In fact, I find it degrades away at the soul and feeds more

division and conflict in our communities.”

Expressing similar intentions, Graybill continued by saying that they “wanted to be a part of making a space on campus where people feel like their voices can be heard and recognized,” and that they hoped “to make the campus feel like a space where everyone’s voice can be equally heard.”

Going further, The Weekly obtained an email from the Provost’s office “regarding the Ad Hoc group on providing guidance on antisemitism, islamophobia, and xenophobia for use in Title VI training,” which was initially announced in a community message from President Kathy Harring, Ph.D. In this follow-up email, Provost Laura Furge, Ph.D., explained that they “want to pause this work and focus more vigorously on education and programming on dialogue across difference.”

Whichever “side” of this con-

flict students may choose to identify or support, it is undeniable that the impacts of this war continue to impact Muhlenberg. To that end, despite their hopes for the committee, Strauss-Cohn admitted she was “unclear on just what this committee will accomplish.”

When asked about the same, Chip Gruen, Ph.D., the chair of this new committee, commented that it was his “hope that our work on the committee helps to promote and support events on campus that encourage careful, analytical and empathetic responses to contemporary events that do not necessarily invite simple responses,” going further to add that he hopes that students “come and participate in events and conversations ready to listen, contribute and understand.”

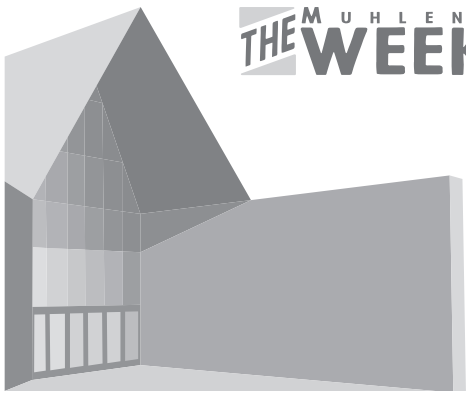
From **SNOW PAGE 1**
ulty either canceled their classes or moved them online. The issue is that faculty are not aware that some of their students are commuters unless they’re told. So it really becomes a situation that needs to be addressed with faculty rather than administration.”
Jesse Allan ‘25 brings up a potential disconnect between many faculty members and students, who are often both expected to commute to campus in inclement weather. “Thankfully, most professors at Muhlenberg are accommodating and understanding. However, ones that live close to the College feel like they must hold classes regardless of the fact that there’s inches of snow on the road.”

The arguable overlooking of commuter students when determining the status of snow days filters into a larger issue that came up in student discussions of the inclement weather policies— if the administration pays proper attention, and gives necessary support to commuter students and their needs.
Tim Black, director of student transitions and family programs, as well as the advisor to Jaber, the inaugural commuter advisor, discussed steps that have been taken to meet the needs of commuter students. “While Muhlenberg is always working to identify opportunities to engage the entire campus community, last year, the entire commuter population specifically was sur-

veyed to ascertain things such as their ability to find parking, get involved on campus, and have a space to call their own on campus. The idea to survey the population came from Jaber. We worked collaboratively to identify which questions got at the heart of what we were looking for, while also providing enough space and a platform for students to identify other needs and wants they may have. This provided us with great data which has allowed us to improve our approach to commuter needs.”
Jaber, the chair of the SGA ad hoc committee for commuter students, and leader of the project to establish the new Commuter Student Lounge in Taylor Hall, gave her insight af-

ter months of working closely with faculty and administration in attempts to address the issue of administration support and concern. “Yes and no. I think the administration undermines the presence of commuters and focuses more heavily on residents because the population of students residing on campus is extremely greater than commuters. However, when I presented my project to them and highlighted all the issues that need fixing, they did not hesitate to work with and help me. They were passionate about it, and really excited to give more attention to the needs of commuters. Huge shoutout to Tim Black! With that said, it’s not ideal that the changes made only happened

because a student, me, decided to survey commuters and bring the issues to admin. It’s really an issue of majority versus minority, and considering what benefits and plans will work best for the greater group.”
With commuter students gaining more visibility on campus through projects including the new lounge, commuter student surveys and the commuter student ad-hoc, it seems that student-driven initiatives with support from staff are making a huge difference to the engagement of commuter needs.



ARTS & CULTURE

“Dance is the hidden language of the soul.”

-Martha Graham

“In Motion” conveys powerful messages through dance

By ADDISON STAR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

PHOTO BY MARCO CALDERON

From Feb. 8 to 10, the Muhlenberg College Theatre and Dance Department put on its 2024 production of “In Motion,” a dance show featuring seven works choreographed by Muhlenberg Dance faculty and visiting professors. The pieces handled a variety of different topics from grief and the subculture of punk, to colonization and resistance. The pieces ranged in length, cast size, dance style and meaning, evoking strong praise from the audience.

Audience member Maya Brooks ‘24 said, “It was wonderful to see all the dancers who have worked hard for months finally put their talent on the main stage. The show was exciting and engaging for its full run time without a dull moment.”

Some of the choreographers, Assistant Professor of Dance Natalie Gotter, Visiting Assistant Professor of Dance Elizabeth June Bergman, Ph.D., and Guest Artist Tommie-Waheed Evans, worked in collaboration with the dancers when putting their pieces together. Co-Director of Dance, Gotter remarked on her process for creating “Not a Bit Afraid.” Gotter said, “The majority of the actual movement being seen was produced by the dancers with prompting and direction from me. I would provide different tasks, questions, games and images that the dancers responded to through movement development. I then adjusted the movement to fit into the aesthetic I was interested in, edited, chopped up, puzzled back together, etc. While the piece is crafted by me, the crafting material was created through their bodies.”

The eight dancers in Gotter’s piece interacted with an elevated table, laying on top and bending off. Gotter said that during rehearsals, “[the cast] spent a lot of time just getting comfortable with it, playing with different ways of getting on and off and discovering what personal safety boundaries were present.”

Dancer Mallory Massache ‘27 spoke about working with and around the table, saying, “In the beginning, we did a lot of work to get comfortable with not only the box but also weight sharing with each other. We had to have a lot of trust in each other for the piece to work and Natalie re-

ally encouraged that trust within us by doing different trust exercises which was very helpful. It posed challenges in the choreography because a lot of the time the things that we were doing started on the ground and then moved to the box so we need[ed] to adjust to that and it took some time to feel comfortable and confident dancing on the box. By the time the performance came, I felt very comfortable with it and it became such a huge part of the piece and definitely wouldn’t have been the same without it.”

Bergman, choreographer of “Dance Punk!” and guest dancer in “THE LEDGE,” also reflected on the process of choreographing with her dancers. Bergman said, “I came into our rehearsals with the desire to explore the question ‘How do you dance punk?’”

A popular dance historian whose work focuses on the 1970s and 1980s, Bergman knew that she wanted to include the “seemingly different” punk and disco subcultures. Bergman worked with her dancers to explore what “punk” meant to them and their experiences with it, watching YouTube videos to gather inspiration from not just the movement of punk but its ideology and fashion as well. Aspects of the piece mimicked “party scenes,” which represented the “environments like dance clubs and music venues” where most punk dancing originated from. Bergman said that she “love[s] social dancing the most, so [she] wanted to bring in the kinds of dancing that have brought [her] the most joy and stage them in scenes or vignettes that connoted the kinds of communities that the styles of dancing [punk and disco] originally came from.”

Maya Schlegel ‘27, who at-

tended a performance of “In Motion” said, “‘In Motion’ was absolutely mesmerizing. I was so impressed that the dancers could remember such intricate and long routines!”

The other choreographers, Director of the Co-Curriculum for Theatre & Dance and Tap Instructor Robyn Watson, Visiting Professor of Jazz Anito Gavino, Assistant Professor of Ballet and Dance Education Heidi Cruz-Austin and Adjunct Professor of Hip Hop Samuel Antonio Reyes crafted poignant and entertaining pieces as well. Gavino’s piece, “The Alchemy of Bantaba,” stood apart from the other six in the show. The visiting assistant professor of jazz created a truly mixed media experience, including audio from the documentary “What Happened, Miss Simone?” and film from her own village in the Philippines that was projected on the back wall of the stage.

The dancers wore colorful tops and long, flowy silk skirts. Gavino knew from the beginning that she wanted to incorporate the skirts because they “represent[ed] the Latin/Caribbean diaspora and dances [from which she did research].” The skirts were yet another layer that helped visually connect the dance to the cultural inspiration used as the basis for the piece. Gavino said that she “also wanted an image of what kingdoms or queendoms would be like before colonization and enslavement... thus the dramatic silk skirts.”

Jacob Lugo ‘26, one of the dancers in Gavino’s piece, said “I’m a quarter Puerto Rican on my dad’s side. Inside that though there’s a mix of Taino, which is an indigenous group in la Borinquen, Afro-Cuban, Afro-Caribbean, most likely some

African and definitely a whole lotta Spanish. I grew up in [New Hampshire] which is probably the whitest state like ever so I kinda learned to compartmentalize and pretend to be 100 percent white, you know? It wasn’t until high school [that] I even talked about being Puerto Rican, and it wasn’t until I came here I started really taking pride in who I am and where I come from.”

Lily Courtney ‘27 said that working on “The Alchemy of Bantaba” “was very emotional” and that even though she couldn’t directly relate to all of the concepts of the piece it became less “about what I looked like when I was dancing, it was more about what message and what story was I trying to tell everybody else?”

In the playbill, Gavino included a quote from Katherine Dunham, choreographer and social activist who founded the first American Black dance company. “After many efforts to arrive at some conclusive decision when thinking of dance, I have decided upon this, that dance is not a technique but a social act and that dance should return to where it first came from, which is the heart and soul of man, and man’s social living.” Gavino said that she loved this quote and included it because “not only do I agree with it, but I also question her differentiation of technique from the act of social dancing. Social dance and the ability to communicate with another human through a movement language in itself is the technique.” After watching “The Alchemy of Bantaba,” it is clear that Gavino understands the technique of communication through social dance and clearly conveyed her themes of freedom and community in addition to displaying the

beauty of dances from the Caribbean and Afro-Cuban traditions.

Zoe Chasinoff ‘26, an audience member, said that she “Really enjoyed seeing ‘In Motion’ as someone who really doesn’t know a lot about dance. Seeing my friends and classmates performing was really beautiful, and I loved watching these talented people do what they love.”

“Grief, it brings the need, the naked freeze” was choreographed by Cruz-Austin, co-director of dance. Cruz-Austin’s ballet piece included the largest number of dancers in the production, with a total of 21. Reflecting on the creation of her piece, Cruz-Austin said, “Because I had such a big cast, I had to be very deliberate about moving them within the space, particularly with transitions, I wanted to make sure the flow of the piece wasn’t disrupted in maneuvering them around and it was important to me to maintain the energy and pulse of the piece throughout.”

The dancers of this piece donned red robes with tons of frills. When asked about the purpose that the robes played in the piece, Cruz-Austin noted that “The robe signifies the lie we tell ourselves and the world to keep going when we are grieving and in pain. They demonstrate[d] the status quo and that life goes on regardless of what may be happening.”

Discussing the experience of participating in “In Motion” for the first time, Courtney said, “It was kind of like a collective community at Muhlenberg where we could just create art and create work that was very meaningful and also positive in a way. And it wasn’t competitive anymore, which felt really nice.”



“rinse. repeat.” choreographed by Robyn Watson

‘Berg alumni deliver the slay in “Slay Seegers!”

PHOTO BY SIERRA ADDY ‘27

By SHAIYAN FEISAL
ARTS AND CULTURE EDITOR

On Feb. 7, Muhlenberg held a drag show titled “Slay Seegers!” where over 300 students attended on a Wednesday evening. The show featured Muhlenberg alumni, who are also drag performers, Pink Pancake, Angela Mansberry, Matzah Belle and Petti Cash along with a host from the class of 2027, Casanova. Before the show, a tabling fair from Students for Queer Advocacy (SQuAd) and Voices of Strength (VOS) offered resources on LGBTQIA+ topics and to speak about their organizations. Halfway through the show, the icons also hosted a walk-off challenge where a few Muhlenberg students, and even a fellow alum, were chosen to walk in a similar style as a drag performer would while performing. After the show, there was a Q&A from the performers themselves where Muhlenberg students asked questions spanning from how their careers developed to their favorite GQ order.

Angela Mansberry recreated the “Liza Minnelli tries to turn off a lamp” Saturday Night Live (SNL) skit, and Petti Cash did a performance where they held a baby doll and threw it in the air while “It’s All Coming Back to Me Now” by Celine Dion was playing in the background. One of Pink Pancake’s performances included lip-syncing to the iconic Britney Spears song “Circus” along with wearing a bedazzling circus outfit.

During the Q&A, Pink Pancake emphasized that drag is



Students dance at the “Slay Seegers!” drag show.

an art form where “as a queer person you can really express your authenticity.” All of the performers said that they make their own mixes and have a lot of freedom and control.

When the alumnis were inquired about future goals, Angela Mansberry said, “I don’t want to be famous, I just like creating art and I want to continue to create art in this form.”

Muhlenberg Activities Council (MAC) representative John Lukan, assistant director of Seegers Union and the student experience, led the planning of the show. Lukan said, “One of the performers had reached out to us at the start of the year to see if there was interest from the campus in a show...It took some time to get things organized and bring together the student organizations who helped with planning, but eventually, we had representatives from the

Student Government Association (SGA), Voices of Strength (VOS), SQuAd, Queer and Trans People of Color Collective (QT-POCC) and MAC at the table to organize the event with our performers. The planning committee was even able to connect us with a student performer, Casanova, who volunteered to serve as the host for the show!”

One challenge that came with planning was simply setting a date for the show. Lukan continued, “Finding a truly free time slot on campus is impossible, but we ended up going for later on a weeknight when we were unable to find a weekend that worked. Once that was set it was a manner of working out what was needed for the event with the student organizations!”

Additionally, VOS detailed their input for the drag show. Emily Orlich ‘24, one of the VOS interns, said they “helped plan

out the little things like the name of the show (I came up with the name ‘Slay Seegers!’) and the VOS-related stuff like what services we could provide and how VOS as a group could help.”

VOS felt like their presence at the drag show was necessary for the student body. Orlich said, “VOS is by definition a peer education group working to support students and spread information about gender and sexual violence. Drag is sexual and sex is a big thing we talk about in VOS and when you’re doing a big event that is sexual, you need to provide resources for people who may need it. That is why VOS is there, to celebrate queerness and a queer art form that is under attack and to provide resources about sex!”

SQuAd President Sarah Wedeking ‘24 discussed the importance of drag at ‘Berg. Wedeking said, “It is so important to have a

drag show at ‘Berg. While we do have a large queer population, having a drag show (particularly with support from the administration, and with alumni performers) creates a space where queerness can thrive and be celebrated.”

An audience member, Megan Block ‘26, stated, “It was my first time at a drag show, and I had no clue what to expect, but it was really fun! The cuts from their music to the parts where they talked with the audience was a smooth transition, and I think that overall it was done really well.”

Another audience member Marley McGehee ‘26 said “I thought it was really fun, and I liked that the drag [performers] were Muhlenberg alumni. It was cool to have a different type of event than we normally do.”

A rom-com review: top ten rom-coms to watch

By SARAH WEDEKING
MANAGING EDITOR

In honor of Valentine’s Day, I will count down some of my favorite romantic comedies. Before I start gushing about James Marsden, I wanted to clarify a common definition of what a rom-com is. Usually, the narrative is light-hearted, mainly focused on a protagonist finding love. I also want to acknowledge that historically, the romantic comedy genre is not diverse. Most of my top rom-coms feature white heterosexual relationships, and this is something I hope changes as the genre progresses. Note that these are my personal favorites, so before you get mad on YikYak, hear me out!

10. “My Big Fat Greek Wedding” (rom 8/10, com 10/10)

“My Big Fat Greek Wedding” is one of my absolute favorite rom-coms, mostly because there is no stressful relationship arc. The conflicts follow Toula Portokalos’s hilarious and wonderful family as both she and them try to navigate her newfound romance with John Corbett’s character, Ian Miller.

9. “Enchanted” (rom 10/10, com 10/10)

“How do you know” it’s one of the best rom-coms? With a kill-

er musical soundtrack, the stunning beauty of the cast and amazing chemistry between the couple, “Enchanted” is fantastic. Also, it completely goes against the tropes of regular Disney films. The princess is the hero in this one, true love is a bit more realistic and James Marsden as the prince defies any expectations anyone had for this film.

8. “The Big Sick” (rom 9/10, com 8/10)

Many people may argue that “The Big Sick” isn’t exactly a romantic comedy, mostly because you’re left sobbing halfway through the movie. But the chemistry between Kumail Ali Nanjiani and Zoe Kazan is wonderful, and the fact that it’s based on Nanjiani’s real marriage is just the icing on the cake. Scenes that live rent-free in my mind: “Four cheese slices on a burger,” and “I’m overwhelmed by you.” I’m overwhelmed by the humor and the heart of this film, and I highly recommend it.

7. “To All the Boys I’ve Loved Before” (rom, 10/10, com 8/10)

“To All the Boys I’ve Loved Before” has it all: fake dating tropes, a comforting aesthetic and the hope that all of us can find our own Peter Kavinsky, or Lara Jean (whichever way you swing). You can tell the first film

is directed by a woman compared to the following sequels, though I do appreciate the soundtrack of the final installment (I highly recommend “The Greeting Committee”). The characters are funny and relatable, and the love confession scene is one of my absolute favorites.

6. “The Princess Bride” (rom 9/10, com 11/10)

“The Princess Bride” not on this list? Inconceivable! This is one of my favorite films of all time, and yes, I count it as a romantic comedy. The campy humor, iconic lines (“My name is Inigo Montoya”) and the kiss that leaves all other pure, passionate kisses behind makes me swoon.

5. “10 Things I Hate About You” (rom 8/10, com 8/10)

“10 Things I Hate About You” is a classic hit now. With a young Heath Ledger and Joseph Gordon Levitt, the film is a funny, cute and campy ride. Based on Shakespeare’s “The Taming of the Shrew,” the movie is so comforting to me. Go watch if you haven’t!

4. “27 Dresses” (rom 10/10, com 9/10)

Although Rotten Tomatoes has given “27 Dresses” 40 percent, I give it 100 percent and that’s what matters. The iconic

“Bennie And The Jets” scene, the ugly dress montage and of course, James Marsden, make this one of my comfort romantic comedies. Not to mention the soundtrack (Corinne Bailey Rae, Amy Winehouse’s “Valerie,” Chaka Khan), the film follows a girl who has been a bridesmaid almost 27 times and a journalist who tries to write an article on this sensation. You can guess what happens...

3. “What If (The F Word)” (rom 10/10, com 9/10)

In my opinion, this is a very underrated rom-com. Featuring Zoe Kazan and Daniel Radcliffe, it focuses on two people who try to be friends amidst the girl’s existing romantic relationship. The banter is incredibly witty and quick, the cinematography is beautiful and the soundtrack is so fun. It makes me want to try fool’s gold, which you can only know after watching the film.

2. “Bridget Jones’s Diary” (rom 10/10, com 10/10)

I re-watched “Bridget Jones’s Diary” recently, and I forgot how much I love this rom-com. It’s a modern retelling of the OG rom-com: “Pride and Prejudice.” Two hot men: Colin Firth and Hugh Grant and one hot woman: Renee Zellweger loosely reenact Jane Austen’s novel in a modern

setting. Jones is a delightfully awkward and funny character, and it’s shown in one of the first scenes when she lip-syncs Jamie O’Neal’s “All By Myself.” One of the most iconic fight scenes in cinema history appears in this movie, and by the time we start to root for Colin Firth’s character, I’m already enamored with the winter vibes of this movie. It is funny and heartwarming—can’t recommend it enough.

1. “When Harry Met Sally” (rom 10/10, com 10/10)

No one should be surprised that “When Harry Met Sally” is number one. It had to be this one. It is the quintessential, must-watch rom-com. First of all, the jazzy soundtrack makes you want to stroll through New York with headphones and dance to Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald songs. The chemistry, the famous lines, “I’ll have what she’s having” and the cast of Billy Crystal and Meg Ryan, truly makes this movie. While it does ask an outdated question, “Can men and women truly be friends[?],” this rom-com is like a warm cup of tea on a rainy day. If you haven’t watched it, what are you waiting for?

Additional reporting by Rebecca Salkin ‘24

Artist spotlight: Levi Roush '24

By Emma Northrop
Staff Writer

From childhood performances in his family home to Muhlenberg musicals, Levi Roush '24 has never stopped exploring his art. A theatre major with a business minor, Roush's time at Muhlenberg has been well spent honing his craft.

When discussing how he first started acting, Roush explains, "Before I was performing on an actual stage, my two older sisters and I were creating our own performances for our family. As much younger children, my sisters and I devised performances made up of songs, dance numbers and skitlets. We would perform them in our basement, inviting grandparents and aunts and uncles. We hung sheets across a rope to make a curtain, and we even had concessions (popcorn) at one of our performances. We called ourselves 'The Little Stars.' What started as just playing pretend with my sisters blossomed into one of my greatest passions."

While Roush was always a performer, he didn't immediately jump into the spotlight. It was his sister Arielle who gave him the push he needed to step on stage. With her support, Roush debuted as Tiny Tim in the Williamsport Community Theater's rendition of "Scrooge." Since then, the stage has become a second home for Roush. He's gone on to perform at summer theater camps, community theaters and in middle and high school productions.

Once Roush realized his passion for theatre, he never gave it up. At Muhlenberg, he's added several works to his resume. He recounts, "My sophomore year I was in an adaptation of Romeo and Juliet called 'Call Me By Any Other Name... Just As Sweet' directed by [former Visiting Assistant Professor of Theatre,] Nigel Semaj, and the spring musical, 'Miss You Like Hell,' directed by [former Visiting Assistant Professor of Acting Jamie McKittrick '04]. In the fall of my junior year, I was in 'The Three-penny Opera,' directed by Jim Peck, Ph.D. The last, and most recent show I took part in was 'And Jesus MoonWalks The Mississippi' this past fall semester." In addition to acting, Roush has also explored design, working as a scenic designer for the studio production "God of Carnage," directed by Joey Marcacci '23.

Each of these productions had a major impact on Roush as an artist. Roush said, "'Call Me By Any Other Name... Just As Sweet' was the first play I ever did that really gave a voice to queer individuals, and allowed us to make a performance uniquely ours. It opened me up to new possibilities of self-expression and community building. 'Miss You Like Hell' inspired me to continue taking part in the telling of stories that are not heard enough," he explains. To Roush, "[Acting] is really about connecting. Connecting with other actors, connecting with the audience, connecting with a playwright, connecting with the creative team and connecting with my-



PHOTO COURTESY OF LEVI ROUSH '24
Roush poses while studying abroad in London.

self."

With each new show, Roush has explored different ways of connecting. Roush elaborated, "I've played a range of roles at Muhlenberg, from schoolboy twink, to biker leather daddy, to slimy beggar to confederate soldier. With all of these characters, my skills have really been stretched and I feel like I've grown a lot."

However, Roush's journey hasn't been confined to the stage. He's learned a lot in the classroom, taking classes in acting technique as well as courses in design and playwriting. Roush states, "I am grateful that the structure of the theatre major has allowed me to explore other areas in theatre and performance outside of acting."

McKittrick also served as a

huge inspiration for Roush. "I took Acting Process with her, as well as a Grotowski course. She introduced me to the psycho-physical acting techniques I find really useful for my acting processes. She is an artist who always brings energy and a willingness to explore that I find really inspiring."

He also finds great inspiration in his sister Arielle, the very same person who first showed him the stage. "I know I am biased, but I think she is one of the

most phenomenal actors I know, always bringing truth to her performances," he shares.

With his time at Muhlenberg coming to a close, Roush is preparing to take all he has learned to this new stage in life. When asked about his plans after graduation, he shared, "I plan to move to Philly in the fall after I graduate. There, I hope to pursue opportunities provided by the many theaters and performance venues within the city."



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I’m over Taylor Swift

By KATHERINE CONLON
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Let me get this out of the way: the title of this article is click-bait (or lookbait I guess if you’re reading a print copy). In what world did you think that I, an OG Swiftie, would ever fully stop listening to the music that defined my childhood and adolescence? Now, if you know me, you might think my main qualm with Swift is the potential grammatical error in her upcoming album’s title: “The Tortured Poets Department” (shouldn’t there be an apostrophe after “poets”?). But, I digress. My primary issue with Swift at this time is her oversaturation.

Taylor is everywhere. At first, I thought it was my algorithmic bubble feeding me more content similar to what I had already interacted with. But when my grandmother started telling me about the gifts Travis Kelce got for Swift’s birthday, or how the couple is already talking about marriage, I knew that I was not the only one with a feed dominated by all things Taylor. We are living in an age of Taylormania, the likes of which have not been seen since the height of The Beatles’ fame (I wasn’t alive then but just like trust me).

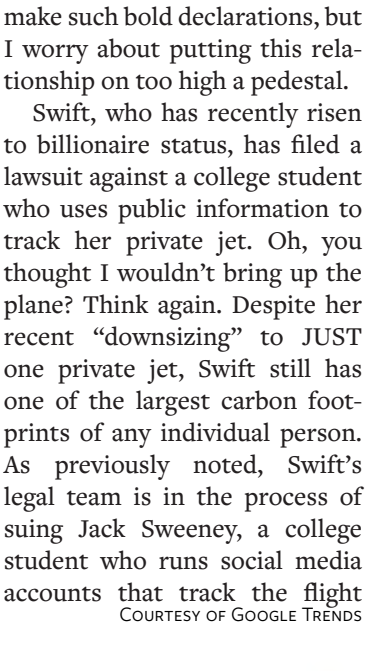
To a general audience, Swift is becoming more of an idea than a person. Looking at Google Trends, a data collection tool used to track how much certain topics are searched, the term “Taylor Swift” has reached its peak popularity between Feb. 4-10. Looking at Enews’ Instagram coverage of the Super Bowl, I concluded that around 32 percent of the posts covering the event were about Swift.

Talking about Taylor in the year 2024 inevitably leads one to the topic of Travis Kelce. Kelce and Swift are arguably the definition of a power couple. Three consecutive Super Bowl wins and four Album of the Year Grammys are just some of the accomplishments that the pair boast. They’re beloved; representing an American ideal that if you work hard enough you too could earn millions by playing for a football team with a racist name. Kelce’s macho attitude coupled with Swift’s girl-next-door image perfectly represents American ideals of white heteronormativity. Obviously, I’m not accusing Swift of intentionally perpetuating these notions, however, the over-the-top Americana, almost Rockwellian image that the general public has of Taylor and Travis is concerning, to say the least. I hesitate to

make such bold declarations, but I worry about putting this relationship on too high a pedestal.

Swift, who has recently risen to billionaire status, has filed a lawsuit against a college student who uses public information to track her private jet. Oh, you thought I wouldn’t bring up the plane? Think again. Despite her recent “downsizing” to JUST one private jet, Swift still has one of the largest carbon footprints of any individual person. As previously noted, Swift’s legal team is in the process of suing Jack Sweeney, a college student who runs social media accounts that track the flight

COURTESY OF GOOGLE TRENDS



Data showing the popularity of “Taylor Swift” as a Google search term.

PHOTO FROM TAYLORSWIFT.COM.



The cover photo of Taylor Swift’s upcoming album, “The Tortured Poets Department”.

patterns of the ultra-wealthy. Swift is alleging that Sweeney is exhibiting behavior that qualifies as stalking and harassment. I do not understand how this legal action is defensible. It effectively makes Swift look more out of touch than she ever has. Does her unrelatability make her more endearing? Or is it causing her to lose the ability to connect with her fanbase through her lyrical relatability? In my opinion, this lawsuit does no favors for her public image. Yet some of her fans still defend her. How is it that all billionaires are bad except when that billionaire is a tall, blonde, millennial white woman who writes songs that you enjoy?

Taylor Swift is politically engaged only when that political engagement is beneficial to her. For instance, her Netflix documentary “Miss Americana” detailed her bravery in speaking out against the Trump administration and emphasized the importance of civic engagement

among young voters. However, how brave was this act when a documentary was necessary for it to be carried out? Swift has remained silent on massive geopolitical issues, including the current war in Gaza. Yet, she associates herself with musicians like the members of Boygenius who have openly called for a ceasefire. Is association her way of getting around having to explicitly comment on political events?

I think that the greatest sign that you respect someone is the ability to thoughtfully critique them. Taylor Swift isn’t perfect and she isn’t our friend, so we shouldn’t feel the need to praise every move that she makes. Holding our favorite celebrities accountable for their actions is vital, especially in such a contentious era. So, let’s be critical thinkers, and make sure that we do not let our love for certain art overshadow our perceptions of the artist.



Comic by Sarah Homer ‘26

Controversy at the Grammy Awards: shocking!

By EMILY NALLY
ASSISTANT CAMPUS VOICES EDITOR

Heartbreak, outrage, excitement, annoyance: what could cause all of these emotions in just the span of three and a half hours? The 2024 Grammy Awards, duh. For those who care, and for those who pretend they don't, here's everything you should know about what went down at this year's Grammy Awards and why so many are still talking about the show.

Let's start with the good stuff! Dua Lipa opened up the awards and was later followed by a surprise performance by Tracy Chapman, singing her hit song "Fast Car" alongside Luke Combs. The performance was stunning—Chapman's voice has somehow gotten even better from her earlier years. We also got a riveting performance from SZA, who took home a few Grammy Awards, winning Best Progressive R&B Album, Best Pop Duo with Phoebe Bridgers for their song "Ghost in the Machine" and Best R&B Song with "Snooze," which she gracefully accepted while also fangirling when she saw Taylor Swift standing up for her.

Now, to completely shatter our hearts, Billie Eilish and FINNEAS together performed their song "What Was I Made For?" from the hit movie "Barbie," creating a beautiful moment that made their later win for song of the year even more lovely. We also got a performance from the



PHOTO BY KEVIN WINTER FOR THE RECORDING ACADEMY.

iconic Joni Mitchell over 50 years after her first Grammy win. This was Mitchell's first-ever Grammy performance, and what an amazing performance it was. She also won a Grammy this year for Best Folk Album. To add onto the icons, Billy Joel performed his new song "Turn the Lights Back On" alongside Laufey, who won her first Grammy for Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album with her record "Bewitched." As a heavy Laufey fan, it was so magical to see her get the recognition she deserves. She wasn't the only one who won their first Grammy, as Miley Cyrus won two for her song "Flowers."

What excited me even more was Boygenius winning not one, not two, but three Grammy awards. Sad music lovers across the world are screaming right now. The band won two of the awards for their song "Not Strong Enough" and won Best Alternative Album for their debut LP "The Record." It was so cute watching them accept each

award, sprinting to the stage, and being starstruck. It was all so deserved.

Speaking of deserved, here's where the drama comes in. Olivia Rodrigo didn't take home any Grammy Awards, which was shocking considering the success of "GUTS" and her turnout from the last award show. I mean if you know me, I'm a huge fan of "GUTS", and I can't say that I wasn't upset when she didn't take home anything.

Controversy over awards doesn't end there though. Jay-Z took to the stage to accept his Dr. Dre Global Impact Award, and while most of his speech was focused on thanking the many important people in his life, he ended it by saying to the Academy, "We want you to get it right." He went on to say that some of the artists don't belong in the category. Now, Beyoncé did not look too pleased with him when he said this, and many others weren't too pleased either, but it definitely had people

talking about the concept of deservingness.

This brings us to the biggest piece of controversy of the night: Taylor Swift. Horror!! All kidding aside, here's what went down. Swift won two awards, the first being Best Pop Vocal Album for "Midnights," where she then announced that she will be releasing her 11th studio album, "The Tortured Poets Department." Hello? Personally, I screamed, and as a fan, I am excited to hear this new record and how the song "So Long, London" will absolutely destroy me. Yet some people claim that her announcing this was selfish and an attempt to make the night about her, which perhaps is true or not. Regardless, I'm excited for the album.

Oh there's more. When Swift made history by winning Album of the Year for the fourth time, being the first artist ever to have won the award that many times, she not only received hate that she didn't deserve the award, but

for bringing Lana Del Rey up on the stage with her. Apparently, many believe it was humiliating to bring Del Rey up, saying that she deserves to be on the stage when she is winning her own award. Now, I agree, to an extent. Del Rey has for sure been snubbed one too many times at the award show, with her music being revolutionary and, as Swift mentioned on the stage, shaping the music industry for many female artists. Though I think it is a damned if you do damned if you don't situation. Swift brought up everyone who helped her produce "Midnights," and that includes Del Rey. If Swift brought everyone but her, she'd be receiving the same amount of hate. So what's the point of aiming all the hate onto Swift, when it could be focused on the academy for not recognizing Del Rey and many other deserving artists?

All in all, there's no shock that the Grammy Awards left people angry, disappointed and full of rage. All emotions are valid of course, and I believe we should question the Academy for not recognizing some of the several artists who should have won, but perhaps we should leave the Awards feeling a little more positive. After all, the night is intended to honor musicians that have shaped our lives with the music that they've created.

"Now and Then" and my dad

By EMMA HOWSON
STAFF WRITER

On Nov. 2 2023, still recovering from the onslaught of fire alarms that went off in Prosser the previous night, I took a nap after getting back from breakfast. I was supposed to meet with my college life coach but I was just too tired (sorry Janelle!). I woke up just after 10 a.m. to find my world had changed.

The Beatles had released their final single, "Now and Then," with the music video soon to follow.

I listened to the song in tears. Was I crying out of sadness or joy? I'm still not sure, but I have a feeling that no other song will ever have such a strong impact on me for the rest of my life.

If you're around me for more than five minutes, I will find a way to insert The Beatles into our conversation. I have been listening to their music since the day I was born. I know the words to almost every single one of their songs. My first concert was Paul McCartney's in 2016. I even wrote about it in my college essay.

You see, The Beatles and their music are foundational to my relationship with my father. If his love had a shape, it would look like the soundwaves of every Beatles track. From playing The Beatles: Rock Band on our Wii to watching Thomas the Tank Engine episodes narrated by Ringo Starr, my childhood was full of the "Fab Four."

It was really painful, then, for this new song to come out not long after I left home for the first time. I wanted my dad to be there next to me, listening, watching the music video, talking to me about what he thought. And sure, I was able to text him, but it wasn't the same. Maybe part of the reason that I was crying was because he wasn't there to hug me.

I knew that going to college would be hard. I'd never been away from home for longer than a week, and I'm very close with my parents and my younger brother. But I didn't realize just how much I missed them until this song came in and reminded me that they weren't by my side. It doesn't help that "Now and Then" is about thinking of someone who isn't around!



PHOTO FROM THEBEATLES.COM.

A tape representing John Lennon's original recording of "Now and Then".

Now that the song has been out for several months, I've had time to reflect on its impact on me, my family and the other Beatles fans in the world. I've seen TikToks and tweets from other people my age talking about how incredible it is that we got to witness a new Beatles song in our lifetime. I saw others wishing that their family members who had passed had the chance to listen. All this impact

from just four minutes and nine seconds of four Liverpool lads coming together one last time.

Even writing this I feel near tears. How can I tell you how much I love the Beatles? How can I tell you about the sadness, the joy, the anger that their music brings out in me?

How can I tell you how much I love my dad?

I suppose I can't. It is a love beyond words. But if you listen

to "Now and Then," which you definitely should, perhaps you'll get a sense.

(I did it Dad. I finally wrote the article. You can stop bothering me about it. But you can keep bothering me about the bass. In fact, never stop bothering me. I love you.)

Wrestling team makes history

PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY '27.

BY PENELOPE SCHNEIDER
STAFF WRITER

The Muhlenberg men’s wrestling team has again made history at the highly anticipated 2024 Centennial Conference (CC) Wrestling Championships. The team’s collective performances culminated in a third-place finish, the best since 2020. Led by Joey Lamparelli ‘24 and Frank DiEsso ‘25, the Mules showcased their prowess on the mat and captured the hearts of spectators with their remarkable feats of strength and skill.

Lamparelli, a standout and 2023 all-American, reaffirmed his status as a wrestling powerhouse, clinching his second consecutive CC title in the fiercely competitive 125-pound weight class. Lamparelli’s journey to victory was marked by strategic brilliance and unwavering resilience as he outmaneuvered his opponents with precision and determination. Reflecting on his remarkable achievement, Lamparelli shared profound insights into his wrestling journey: “Wrestling is an extremely tough sport that you cannot skate by in. To be great, there have to be sacrifices.” His inspiring words resonate deeply with aspiring athletes and exemplify the dedication and sacrifices required to excel at the collegiate level.

DiEsso also delivered a stellar performance, attaining his first CC gold medal and career title as a Mule. DiEsso’s journey to the top of the podium was characterized by sheer determination and unwavering focus, as he showcased the right technique and composure in each about. In a thrilling championship showdown, DiEsso got an early jump with two takedowns in the first period and led 7-1 after two, but his opponent closed the gap midway through the third period. Undeterred, DiEsso escaped and recorded a takedown in the closing seconds to secure the 11-5 win and the championship, cementing his place in Muhlenberg wrestling history.

In addition to Lamparelli and DiEsso’s stellar performances, Andrew Loniewski ‘27 and Ryan Fairchild ‘26 showcased their talent and determination on the mat. Loniewski reached the final with a technical fall—his 20th win of the season—and a 5-1 decision. Despite falling short in the final against a returning All-American, Loniewski’s remarkable achievements highlight his immense potential and contributions to the team’s success. On the other hand, Fairchild displayed strong resilience and achievement, once again pinning his first opponent in just 41 seconds and securing a thrill-



Men’s wrestling faces Ursinus on Feb. 1.

ing overtime victory in the semifinals. Despite falling short in the final, Fairchild’s indomitable spirit and unwavering resolve serve as a source of inspiration for his teammates and fans alike. This season marks a promising future at Muhlenberg for both the first-years and sophomores with exciting opportunities in store for the program.

The successes of Lamparelli, DiEsso, Loniewski, Fairchild and

the entire Muhlenberg wrestling team at the CC Championships exemplify the spirit of Muhlenberg’s athletes, inspiring future generations to strive for excellence both on and off the mat.

Lamparelli aptly remarks and lives by the statement by Iowa Hawkeyes coach Dan Gable, “Once you’ve wrestled, everything else in life is easy.” These words encapsulate the invaluable lessons learned on the wres-

ting mat such as perseverance, resilience and the pursuit of greatness. All of which are qualities that extend far beyond the confines of the wrestling arena. The Mules’ performances last weekend will be remembered for years and are a testament to the team’s unwavering dedication and commitment to excellence.

‘Berg welcomes new tennis coach

PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY '27.

BY OLIVIA OBERMAN
SPORTS EDITOR

How do you measure success as a coach?

“I measure success by the quality of the experience we can provide for the student-athletes. The scoreboard matters and is part of that experience, but ultimately I want them to be better people from being a part of our program that will help them stay connected to each other and to Muhlenberg for years to come,” said Muhlenberg’s new Head Tennis Coach Doug Maynard.

Muhlenberg’s tennis program recently announced the exciting hire of their new head coach, Doug Maynard, a certified U.S. Professional Tennis Association elite. Some of his accolades extend to winning Big South Conference men’s coach of the year in 1986 while at the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Asheville (a Division I program) and coaching six men’s and women’s All-Americans. These All-Americans included the 2022 ITA Cup women’s doubles national champion and the 2023 NCAA Division III women’s doubles national champion.

A standout tennis player himself, Maynard was inspired to get into coaching early on. He said, “I was fortunate to have excellent coaches when I was growing up and had experience with world-class players and coaching regularly early in my career.



New Head Coach Doug Maynard conducts an outdoor tennis practice.

They had a profound impact on me personally and in my development as a player and coach. I became interested and enjoyed the process and success of developing as well as the results.”

In high school, Maynard was crowned the North Carolina state singles champion and was ranked top 15 nationally while a collegiate player at UNC at Asheville. He went on to be named Asheville’s 1983 Male Athlete of the Year.

Aside from using his own experiences to guide his athletes to success on the courts, his

coaching values include a strong focus on their overall personal growth. Coach Maynard explains, “The opportunity to have an impact and share in the lives of student-athletes is special. Seeing the athletic and personal growth of young men and women along with their development of lifelong relationships is very rewarding.”

He reveals his immense pride and excitement in fulfilling the new position, “I’m excited about the opportunity to continue building a program with outstanding student-athletes who

are attracted to the excellent academic, athletic, and community culture here at Muhlenberg. I look forward to competing in a very strong conference that boasts some of the nation’s top Division III tennis programs. The athletic administration, coaches, and staff are very supportive and I’m happy to be reunited with our new assistant coach and former coaching colleague, Dennis Olenik.”

After a strong fall season, both the men’s and women’s tennis teams are ready to build on their established competitive

edge. Their spring season sounds off this Saturday, Feb. 17, in an away conference match against Johns Hopkins University.

Isaac Schulman ‘25 expresses, “Coach Maynard has injected a lot of excitement as we gear up for the season. We’re approaching every practice with a plan to build up our skills and tactics. We’re aiming for a strong spring season, building on our successes from the fall. With the momentum that we have gained, we are determined to elevate our performance and make a big jump this season.”

Although there has been limited time between Coach Maynard’s arrival and the onset of the spring season, the transition seems to be natural and organized. Josh Simon ‘27 elaborates, “So far our practices have been very well laid out. We’re able to get a lot of work done with the limited space we have.”

Coach Maynard is setting the standards high from the start, “My first goal is to continue building a culture that inspires student-athletes to develop as young men and women and tennis players. We have goals to compete at a higher level in the conference and to recruit outstanding student-athletes that will impact our program, the college, and the community.”

Simon continues, “Coach Maynard is what this team needs in terms of a leader and coach.”

PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY '27.

FROM **PLAYOFFS** PAGE 12

still up for grabs. Currently, the Mules hold the sixth and final playoff spot in the standings, as Ursinus College has an 8-8 in-conference record (12-11 overall), putting them as the fifth seed. Right behind Muhlenberg in the standings is Dickinson College, who currently hold an in-conference record of 6-10 (9-14 overall). With the playoff race as tight as it is, the Mules can lock in a playoff position if they win their final two games of the season. If the Mules are only able to win one of the final two, it's still likely they'll make the postseason. However, it depends on how Ursinus and Dickinson each close out their final two games.

Discussing the team's mentality for the final two games, Williams-Johnson said, "The mentality going into the next couple of games is the same as it's been all season. We know what we need to do to win and if we do those things, we'll put ourselves in a good position to come out on top. We are confident that we can compete with any of the top teams in the conference."

Despite it being an up-and-down year for them, the team knows that if they make the playoffs, every team will be starting with a new slate. "Going into the playoffs we know it's a whole new season and every game is

win-or-go-home. Once the playoffs start, nothing that happened during the regular season really matters and we'd rather be playing our best basketball now rather than early in the season," said Williams-Johnson.

As everyone on the team (besides the first-years) was a part of the Mules' postseason trip last year, they know what they're getting into if they make it again this season. "The experience we have will definitely be beneficial this time around. The older guys know what it's like to be in this position and what it takes to get wins in the playoffs," Williams-Johnson said. "It's not easy so we just have to make sure we're all on board and willing to do what we can individually to come together and get wins at this time of the year."

The Mules' final game of the regular season is Feb. 17 at Gettysburg. If the team can make the playoffs, their first game of the postseason will be on Feb. 20. If they make the playoffs as the sixth seed, they will travel to whoever the third seed is and play there. Similarly, if they finish as the fifth seed, they will be hosted by whoever the fourth seed ends up being. Hopefully, the team can finish victorious in these final two games and make the playoffs for the third time in the past four seasons.



Men's basketball plays Moravian on Nov. 15.

PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY '27.



FROM **SENIOR** PAGE 12

the experience, "Senior Day was a great experience. It was a great celebration with my teammates and family. We are a really close-knit team so I will definitely miss all the fun times with my teammates whether that be on or off the court." Her time at Muhlenberg not only gave her valuable memories, but she claimed great achievements. More specifically, in their Senior Day game against McDaniel, she pulled down a game-high of seven rebounds for an ultimate total of 216 this season. Not to mention, this is the most rebounds for a Mule in the past seven years. Her energy is unmatched and truly embodies

the Muhlenberg philosophy of strength. Stockfeder said, "My mindset is to finish on a positive note."

Mainly, her excellence and mindset on the court will be missed next year. Ultimately, these seniors' legacy has touched the team in more ways than one. Rachel Saxton '25 commented on their impact, "As a junior, Senior Day to me is highlighting and appreciating everything the seniors have done for me, the team and lastly the school. I think it's very important to highlight the family that these seniors continue to foster and how they have helped

the rest of the team grasp the concept of togetherness, belonging and leadership." Mainly, the

"I've learned to really appreciate every moment when I am playing..."

team will forever cherish the seniors' mentorship and memories.

As the underclassmen consider the current seniors leaving, they can't help but think about their own journey at Muhlenberg. Unger said, "As a junior,

Senior Day made everything feel a little more real. Before I know it, It will be my Senior Day and my basketball career will be over. It seems like it is a long time away, but time really does fly. I've learned to really appreciate every moment when I am playing, even when it gets hard as it's a long season." As a Muhlenberg community, we will forever remember every Mule that is involved in athletics. The current seniors have left a legacy that doesn't stop evolving and getting passed down to younger generations. We look forward to seeing the growth of every individual and recogniz-

ing everyone's achievements in being a part of collegiate athletics. Most of all, the women's basketball team has manifested a strong team atmosphere and will continue to excel on and off the court.

Senior superstars: women’s basketball

By Lexi Sipos
Assistant Sports Editor

On Feb. 10, Muhlenberg honored its women’s basketball seniors in a match against McDaniel. The

Mules not only came out on top with a 67-36 victory but were also given the opportunity to reminisce about their time here at Muhlenberg.
Number 23, Caroline Horst

’24, displayed grit and confidence during the game and recognized her last four years as a Mule. Horst said, “It was a special time to be recognized and reflect on the last four years. The

friendships and memories I have made over the years are something I will always remember. Specifically, my favorite memories this year were when Ava Connolly [’25] hit the game-winning buzzer-beater shot to beat Ursinus, along with the tournament at Massachusetts.”

Horst has had an outstanding performance this season by starting every game and representing the team as captain. Her in-game goals displayed her consistent mentality along with the team’s intentions. “I wanted to be sure to come out strong and aggressive in an effort to put them away early. We were able to execute as our zone defense was effective in forcing turnovers and converting that into points in transition. As a team, we hoped to play together as one and get a win, and we were able to achieve that!” Caroline will remain a leader and powerful influence in their upcoming game against Brynn Mawr.

Number 21, Abigail Scheidel ’24, was a strong asset for the Mules since her time began as a first-year. She was one of two players to appear in all 25 games in her first season. In addition to her amazing athletic capabilities, she had a chance to reflect on what Senior Day meant to her. “Senior Day meant a lot

to me because our parents and teammates put in so much time and effort to make it a wonderful day for the three of us. It is bittersweet for the season to come to an end, but it meant a lot to be honored and to have my four years at Muhlenberg celebrated,” Scheidel said.

The day is full of emotions, and it is hard to articulate the feeling. However, Scheidel finds comfort in her favorite memory. Scheidel said, “The first thing that comes to mind is beating Gettysburg last season. Gettysburg is one of the top teams in our conference and the two-time defending CC champs, so beating them was a great and exciting feat. Emily Unger [’25] hit a game-winner with less than a second left on the clock and it was one of those games where we all contributed and it was a strong, team effort.” Scheidel was a positive force and will continue to be a standout individual in their last game of this season. Most of all, her presence will be a constant reminder of her work ethic and determination.

Number 15, Jenna Stockfeder ’24, who came into college with the class of ’25 but is graduating early in May, was honored during Senior Day. She commented on

[SEE SENIOR PAGE 11](#)



Women’s basketball faces Ursinus on Jan. 23. Photo Editor Kira Bretsky ’27.

A playoffs race

By Dylan Rosenblatt
Senior Staff Writer

The Muhlenberg men’s basketball team managed to go 1-1 in their past two games, both against Centennial Conference (CC) teams eliminated from playoff contention, Haverford College and McDaniel College. In their game at Haverford on Feb. 6, the Mules dominated, winning 82-65, led by Luke Gordos ’25 who tied his career-high of 22 points. However, against the Green Terror on Feb. 10, the Mules were without Giovanni Rubino ’24, the second-leading scorer in all of the CC, and despite leading for the majority of the game, they lost to McDaniel 76-69 in overtime. Now, holding an in-conference record of 7-9 and an overall record of 8-15, the Mules must win the final two games of the regular season if they want to solidify their CC playoff seeding.

It hasn’t been the best season for the Mules, but they’ve done enough to put themselves in a spot to make the playoffs. Jayson Williams-Johnson ’25 spoke about how the team is bouncing back after a tough loss, “We definitely should have won that game versus McDaniel and it’s still a little frustrating because we didn’t execute when we needed to down the stretch to secure the win. But at this point in the season it’s important for us to recognize what we need to do in the upcoming games and put that one behind us.”

While it’s clear the top four seeds for the men’s basketball CC playoffs this year will be Johns Hopkins University, Gettysburg College, Franklin & Marshall College and Swarthmore College, the final two seeds are

[SEE PLAYOFFS PAGE 11](#)



Men’s basketball celebrates a win against Dickinson on Nov. 28. Photo Editor Kira Bretsky ’27.

Coming up this week in
SPORTS
Feb 15, - Feb. 21

Women’s Tennis

MUHLENBERG

vs

JOHNS HOPKINS

Sat, Feb. 17 @ 11:00 a.m.
Deitrich Field House

Men’s Basketball

MUHLENBERG

vs

GETTYSBURG

Sat, Feb. 17 @ 4:00 p.m.
Gettysburg, Pa.

Men’s Lacrosse

MUHLENBERG

vs

SCRANTON

Wed, Feb. 21 @ 4:00 p.m.
Scranton, Pa

Women’s Lacrosse

MUHLENBERG

vs

MORAVIAN

Sun, Feb. 21 @ 4:00 p.m.
Varsity Field



The Office of Global Education coordinates all MILA programs.

The future of the MILA program

New changes in the MILA program lead to uncertainty.

By AMY SWARTZ
NEWS EDITOR

The Office of Global Education has undergone a significant number of changes in the most recent academic year, as the department has been going through massive staffing turnover. Donna Kish-Goodling, Ph.D., who retired as director of global education in 2022, fell back into her old position last semester.

As of Feb. 19, Kish-Goodling is listed as the interim dean of global education, while Marcia Morgan, Ph.D. is designated as the dean of global education as per the College's website. When asked what impact the new dean of Global Education will have on the Muhlenberg Integrated Learning Abroad (MILA) program, Provost Laura Furge, Ph.D., working in response with Morgan stated, "The new dean, Marcia Morgan is fantastic! She has been a professor at Muhlenberg for nearly two decades, lived abroad, held highly prestigious international scholar positions and she will be a great partner with faculty. Note that starting fall 2024, we will also have a 'Coordinator for MILAs' position that will be held by Associate Professor of French Eileen McEwan, Ph.D. who has led MILAs and she will have a huge impact on supporting MILAs."

Since this new change in the staffing of the Department of Global Education, there has been a plethora of changes to the MILA program, through individual MILA courses and the structure of the

program as a whole.

Though unclear exactly when, there seemed to be a pause on MILA programming. Senior Lecturer of Biology, Kimberly Heiman, Ph.D., one of the professors currently leading the Japan MILA, touched upon this. "There was a pause in planning for MILAs, that happened for a small window of time when there was a transition of leadership. But that was just a pause that has now been restated."

This semester, there were originally four MILAs that were going to run – trips to Panama, the Potomac, Costa Rica and Japan. However, Panama and the Potomac were canceled at the end of last semester due to "insufficient enrollment." This message was shared with students through an email that went out the Thursday of finals week, Dec. 14, well after students were advised to register for spring semester courses.

With the courses being canceled so late in the semester, course registration was a challenge. Almarah Urman '26, who was enrolled in the Potomac MILA, shared their challenging experience. "I struggled to find a course that worked with my schedule and fulfilled at least some of the requirements Potomac would have filled for me, and ultimately, I ended up in a class that I don't enjoy and am not getting much out of."

When Furge, with Morgan aiding in response, was asked about the impact that the late cancellation had on students, their response was, "Muhlenberg offers a diverse range of courses and even after

registration is complete, there are many courses that have open seats across all disciplines and many opportunities to do something interesting, different and challenging. If a student has a particular graduation requirement they still need to meet and it's already spring of senior year, they may work with the dean of academic life to explore options."

The Office of Global Education would not individually respond to requests for a comment, despite multiple attempts at contact.

The issue of insufficient enrollment seems to be the focal point of a myriad of discussions surrounding the MILA program. When asked about the quota for MILA courses, Maddie Davidson '25 gave her opinion. "I think the quota makes a lot of sense. Admin needs to justify such a hefty cost, especially because a lot of us request financial aid. I do wonder, though, how many students make a transformative experience like the MILA Potomac worth it? Still, while there's a quota, there will continue to be cancellations. I think we could have seen this cancellation coming sooner, though."

It seems that this policy of cancellations isn't becoming more lax, rather, it is becoming stricter. This semester, the Office of Global Education is in the process of revising the MILA handbook. Neither the new MILA handbook nor the old MILA handbook can be found online, though the general faculty handbook is easily accessible. When asked if The Weekly could obtain a copy of this hand-

book, no response from Furge was given.

On Feb. 8, The Weekly contacted Associate Professor of English Linda Miller, who is one of the faculty members on the Ireland MILA. Miller was also supposed to be on the Potomac MILA this spring. When asked if she had this new handbook, she mentioned, "Yes, I was sent one."

In a similar vein, The Weekly spoke with Heiman on Feb. 9. She stated, "I will say that I received the updated handbook. It was only updated about two days ago." Later, she mentioned, "I received the information on about the sixth [of February]." Heiman also claimed that the handbook change "might be a codification of some procedures, but it didn't strike me as anything shifting policy dramatically in any way."

However, on Feb. 13, when asked about the new and revised procedures that MILAs have to abide by, Furge, in collaboration with Morgan, stated, "Handbook is still being crafted."

Miller gave insight on some of the more controversial policy shifts that the new handbook lays out. "The issue that I think might discourage faculty is the rigid requirement in enrollments, 15 students for a MILA taught by two faculty and 22 for a MILA taught by three faculty. MILAs taught by three faculty also need special permission from the Provost." She went on, saying, "I think that these hard set numbers are discouraging to faculty members who do the hard work of plan-

SEE MILA PAGE 4

Arts & Culture

"Head Over Heels" helmed by new director.
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Campus Voices

Emma Ash '24 campaigns for college radio.
PAGE 8

Sports

New baseball field for 'Berg.
PAGE 12

THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY

Serving the Muhlenberg College Community since 1883

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The Muhlenberg Weekly strives for accuracy in reporting and writing, but we acknowledge that mistakes happen. Readers are invited to submit corrections about errors in articles, and they should be submitted to weeklyeditor@gmail.com. Corrections are also brought to our staff’s attention by our own editors and writers. Our staff will review the suggested correction, consult with the author of the article, and issue the appropriate correction. Online corrections are located at the bottom of the article. Print corrections are located within the paper, on the page indicated in the online edition. However, The Weekly does not grant take-down requests for articles.

ADVERTISING POLICY

We request that advertising material be submitted by the Monday preceding publication at 5 p.m. If materials have not been received at that time, the advertisement will not run and the advertiser is still responsible for 100% payment. We reserve the right to decline any advertisement that is misleading, inaccurate, fraudulent, or deemed generally unacceptable. This determination will be made by the Business Staff in consultation with the Editor-in-Chief. The Muhlenberg Weekly maintains a distinction between its news & editorial content and advertising. As such, advertisements will not be accepted if they imitate the general style of The Weekly, intentionally or unintentionally. Examples of this include, but are not limited to: headlines, bylines, fonts, and column-arrangements. In order to make this distinction, The Weekly also reserves the right to include the word “advertisement” on any advertisement that is deemed too native.

CAMPUS SAFETY NOTES

2/09/24 Traffic—Report of vehicle illegally parked in staff parking lot. Vehicle booted by campus safety officer, boot later removed. Injured Student—Report to stand by for arrival of AEMS to transport student to hospital in the Health Center.	individual to hospital.
2/10/24 Alcohol Violation—Report of alcohol violation in MILE house, MCEMS responded, AEMS responded and transported student to hospital.	2/15/24 Panic Alarm—Report of alarm from panic button in Haas College Center. Upon arrival it was caused by accidentally hitting the button. Animal Complaint—Report of animal flying around in Brown Hall. Upon arrival nothing could be noted.
2/13/24 Sick Student—Report of injured student at MILE house. MCEMS responded, student transported to hospital by Campus Safety. Suspicious Person—Report of suspicious person at MILE house. Upon arrival individual identified and spoken to, no further incident. Bias—Report of bias, investigation ongoing.	2/17/24 Sick Student—Report of injured student at 2201 Chew St., transported to hospital by Campus Safety.
2/14/24 Sick Student—Report of sick visitor in Seegers Union. MCEMS responded, AEMS responded and transported	2/18/24 Alcohol Violation—Report of alcohol violation in Seegers Union, MCEMS responded, AEMS responded and transported student to hospital. 2/19/24 Suspicious Person—Report of suspicious person at Seegers Union. Upon arrival individual identified and spoken to, no further incident. Traffic—Report of hit and run to vehicle in Commuter Lot. No suspects at this time.

CORRECTION

In last week’s article, “A committee amidst conflict,” The Weekly neglected to include quotes submitted by Sabeen Safi ‘26 and Amina Akhrorkulova ‘27. The online version of this article has been updated to include their statements. The Weekly extremely regrets this oversight.

2024 Commencement Luncheon



Immediately following commencement ceremonies, graduates, families and guests are invited to attend an all-you-care-to-eat buffet luncheon in the Wood Dining Commons.

Tickets:



dining.muhlenberg.edu



College set to expand Seegers Union

A deep dive into the plans for a new Seegers.

By MATTHEW KLINGER & ADDISON STAR
News Editor & Senior Staff Writer

Students coming back to campus after winter break may have been surprised to see bright spray paint and small flags extending from Seegers heading towards Chew St. Both the paint and the flags are the beginning of a Seegers expansion, set to break ground at the end of the academic year. The College first announced plans for a remodel three years ago while Fahy Commons was still in the planning process. Now, with Fahy Commons completed and operational, the College has plans to start on the second capital project in as many years.

When the Seegers expansion was first announced in 2021, the initial design was to add 42,000 sq. ft. of space to the building, expanding it down to Chew St. Since the project was first announced, the plans have been slightly modified, though all the initial features have remained the same. According to Curt Topper, Muhlenberg's CFO, "This will be a 37,000 square-foot expansion. It will include an enhanced Career Center that features dedicated space for preprofessional advising and career readiness. This will make career and preprofessional advising services visible, central and accessible for students, faculty, staff, alumni and community members. The addition will include versatile classroom and gathering spaces for student organizations and activities, a relocated Office of Alumni Affairs, and a major new events space for all members of the Muhlenberg community."

Muhlenberg has hired Philadelphia-based architects Voith and MacTavish LLP for the design, and the College is also working with Structure Tone Inc. to manage construction for the project. When discussing the timeline, Topper noted that "plans are still being finalized, but we hope to have construction underway this summer and to have all the work completed by January 2026."

Given that Seegers is the student hub on campus, the College is aware that the remodel could create a disruption to student life. Topper stated that Muhlenberg "is working with the construction manager to limit disruptions." That being said, Topper also mentioned that "there will be periods during which some current rooms in Seegers Union will be taken offline for renovation."

It is important to note that this is not the first time that Muhlenberg has remodeled Seegers Union, so the College has experience with remodeling the building in a way that minimizes disruptions for students. Topper explained that "this is the fifth renovation [or] addition to Seegers. The most recent was the addition of the Wood Dining Commons. Across all these projects, our focus has been on improving the facility to support the student experience. We realize how central and essential Seegers is to campus life and culture—for dining, social gatherings, performances, lectures, student organization work, alumni events and much more—and we want to be sure to provide the best possible experience and spaces to our students, staff and faculty."

The expansion will not come cheap. Topper estimates that "the Seegers expansion project will cost between \$30 and \$40 million." To pay for the expansion, the College is using a combination of private funding and capital bond debt. At least some of the private funding is coming from the Boundless Campaign. As of right now, \$12 million of the \$104.3 million that the campaign has raised is going towards the project. Another source of funding was \$7.5 million made in 2020 for capital projects. Part of that gift was used for Fahy Commons, but the remaining amount will help to fund the Seegers Expansion. Topper also reassured students that because the College is using both private funding and capital bonds, the project will not necessitate an increase in tuition charges.

Not all students share the administration's excitement about the expansion. Students are concerned about what construction means for the General's Quarters and surrounding areas. Daniel Torres '25 expressed his concerns, stating, "[Possibly] not having [General's Quarters] is

really disappointing, and I really wish this could have been planned in a way that students wouldn't have to worry about such a big hub having to be blocked off."

Vered Wolpaw '25 shared a similar thought, saying "I also thought that it would be done while [most students weren't here.] So hearing that it will take a very long time to be done and then [be] cause [it's] a big place on campus that students spend a lot of their time, to be partially shut down is a little concerning."

Another student, Ellie Alexander '26 mentioned that because of the small size of the school she wondered "what [the school is] going to do with all that space [once the construction is done]."

Despite the concerns, some students are excited about the project. One anonymous student said, "I like the fact that they're trying to expand and add some things that will make the school more attractive."

PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY '27



Small marking flags indicate construction work to be done at Seegers Union.

International elections: Bangladesh

Bangladesh serves as an essential reminder of the importance of electoral integrity.

By KABIR BURMAN
Staff Writer

2024 is increasingly shaping up to be more than just an election year here in the States. Instead, it might just be the election year for the world.

Over these 12 months, more than 60 countries are about to cast their vote in national elections. This would mean that around 4 billion people, or roughly half the planet, could go to the polls in what is set to be the greatest electoral exercise in human history. Yet, despite this global celebration of democracy, one could also argue that this system of governance has never been more threatened.

From India to Italy to El Salvador, popularly elected leaders are increasingly turning away from the core tenets of democracy, often with the approval of the vast majority of the electorate. The Freedom House Index, which monitors the health of democracies around the world, stated that global freedom declined for the 17th consecutive year in 2023. While more people than ever before are actually voting, the quality of democracy that they are operating within seems to be declining.

This brings us to the South Eastern nation of Bangladesh, which has a population of 170 million. More than 1,800 candidates representing 27 different parties contested just over 300 seats in Bangladesh's national parliament. Yet, this past January's election was an election in

name only.

Winning in January, the incumbent Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, just began her fifth term in office after being in power since 2009. Winning almost 75 percent of the vote, she faced virtually no competition with the main opposition, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), boycotting the elections. Having cited government interference through voting irregularities and an intense crackdown with thousands of political opposition members being arrested, the opposition called on people to not participate and sit out the election.

Besides this, there have also been growing concerns about rampant corruption within government—all of it against a background of an economic downturn. While Hasina has undeniably boosted the country's economy as a whole, with extreme poverty rates almost falling by half, her record has recently been called into question. Worsening working conditions have caused growing labor unrest, and protests for higher wages to combat diminishing purchasing power have all caused immense strain on society.

"While she has all but decimated the opposition party under a secular authoritarian style of government, she also generated a lot of prosperity - mainly for the rich, but things have trickled down. If you look at its Human Development Index, Bangladesh now outranks India, which is a much more powerful country. In the Gender Inequality Index, the country



PHOTO FROM HASINA'S CAMPAIGN, UNSTOPPABLE BANGLADESH, ON X.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

has been the top performer for the ninth year in a row in South Asia," said Political Science Professor Mohsin Hashim, Ph.D. Hashim, an expert in Bangladeshi politics, highlighted that "this might just be the year that Bangladesh crosses the rubicon in an absolute authoritarian direction."

Like Bangladesh, the US is experiencing a growing divide between two rival parties, faltering faith in an economy that only seems to serve a few, and decreasing levels of faith in the electoral process. And, like Bangladesh, the United States will also head to the polls this year, casting its votes in the general elections nine months from now.

On the ballot are two candidates with radically different visions for the country moving forward. While unprecedented for various reasons, it is also one of the first times that one of the two forerun-

ner candidates has been indicted, with Donald Trump currently facing a total of 91 charges across four criminal cases, including 44 federal charges and 47 state charges. All of the charges are felonies. While part of the country believes this is merely long overdue justice, another sect characterizes the same as political retribution.

Now the country faces a looming prosecution, a divisive presidential election, a democracy on trial—and it's all taking place in an environment which is geopolitically unstable and economically depressed. Yet, while it might be easy to become distracted by all that's happening in the world, it becomes crucial that we keep a close eye on these elections because, as Hashim said, "not all democratic backsliding looks the same."

Bridging the Gap

By TARA SIMONS
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Tuesday, Jan. 23 marked the first meeting of the Bridging the Gap Program for 2024. The five-week curriculum occurred every Tuesday as an introduction for students to learn effective dialogue skills and how to apply those skills in their everyday lives. The program was developed through Interfaith America, a non-profit organization founded in 2002 by Eboo Patel. Eboo Patel is a civic leader who believes that religion can be used as a “bridge of cooperation rather than a barrier of division” (Saint Martin’s University). Muhlenberg sends students to the Interfaith America conference every summer to engage in productive dialogue with others. The program does not specifically relate to interfaith dialogue but is open to strengthening any type of dialogue.

Student Facilitator Rachel Jones ‘27 said, “This program hopes to help people to stop and think instead of hearing and reacting. As much as we may want to reply and rebuttal something that we disagree with just to get our opinions across, we should listen in the same way that we want to be heard. Hopefully, this mindset helps allow for tough conversations to happen in even our closest friend groups.”

The student facilitators all went on the Alliance for Justice and Active Leadership (AJAL) retreat. The AJAL retreat has been going on for 14 years at Muhlenberg and has been employing dialogue as a method for social change.

Jones said, “The goal of the program isn’t to change people but to change the way we think about others and the way that we react to others who believe something we don’t. Also, to help people understand that everyone is different and that we all come from different backgrounds that make us think the way we think and make us who we are.”

The first week of the program is called “Identifying Your Motivations and Values.” During this session, students think about why they want to build bridges in the first place. This week is not used to convince them but rather to encourage them when it gets difficult to converse with someone who holds differing views from them. Harli Strauss-Cohn ‘24, who is a double-major in Sustainability and



Bridging the Gap meets on Feb. 20 for their fourth meeting in the series.

International Studies, said that “the definition of bridge-building we discussed on the first day of the program is that it’s about ‘engaging across differences in ways that respect identities, foster mutual relationships and seek a common good.’”

In the second week, titled “Five Skills of Deep Listening,” students learn specific skills that will help them succeed in understanding another person’s viewpoint. For instance, one skill of deep listening is silence, where one person says nothing as the other person expresses their perspective and opinion. Another skill is footprint, which means repeating small things back to the other person that they just said. By repeating the person’s words back to them you affirm their speaking value and experience. It’s important to remember that dialogue is a two-way street. Jones also says, “I firmly believe that ‘two wrongs don’t make a right,’ and if you are not willing to listen, learn or hear others, then you are wrong. Not your opinion, not your perspective, but you. I think that Bridging the Gap does a great job of implementing and educating on the importance of listening to others and finding value in conflicts of interest. Also, I just knew that the program would be a great way to get involved in conflict

prevention.”

In the third week, entitled “The Power of Storytelling,” students had the chance to learn what makes a story effective, memorable and powerful. This session also taught students how to tell stories when they are in difficult situations so that they know exactly what details and certain aspects they want to include in their stories. This week is about people’s origin story and the sharing of their beliefs and values.

In the fourth week, called “Engaging Tension Constructively,” students dive deeper into listening and storytelling. Students learn how to approach a conversation when faced with a difference of opinion. They learn how to listen deeply and also how to share their stories with conviction, in a posture of ‘strong back and soft front,’ Buddhist teaching. Having a ‘strong back’ means being courageous and resilient. When you have a ‘strong back,’ you will feel fearless, grounded and have a sense of belonging. Having a ‘soft front’ means staying gentle and open in the midst of difficult situations. It’s about embracing vulnerability and discomfort.

Then in the fifth week, titled “Applying your Skills,” student facilitators construct a plan to think concretely about how they are going to connect their newly devel-

oping skills for their leadership on campus. The students take the dialogue skills they learned, and model social change on campus and in their communities. One element of creating social change is the further education of dialogue. The program will end on Tuesday, Feb. 27, but will hopefully leave students more knowledgeable and skilled on how to discuss difficult topics in their everyday life.

By learning how to engage in skillful and productive dialogue, students can hear other’s perspectives without argument and conflict. This is crucial because “Life is a continuous process of learning,” said Reverend Janelle Neubauer. “If we don’t engage in conversation around differing beliefs or information that sometimes challenge our own modes of thinking, then we’ll remain stagnant. That will only limit our individual growth and growth in the community and can be detrimental to the communities that surround us. Instead, practicing the skills necessary for dialogue offers us a way to hear about the lived experiences of our community and, in turn, to better articulate our own experiences. This is how we keep learning, growing and building bridges.”

FROM MILA PAGE 1
ning a MILA.”

Miller continued to specifically discuss the Potomac MILA. “The Potomac MILA was canceled during final exam week, and that was very disappointing and frustrating for the faculty. I can’t speak for the students enrolled in the MILA, but I can imagine that they were as frustrated and disappointed. Of course, if you are going to decide to cancel a MILA based on enrollment numbers, then the final decision to run a MILA will happen after registration. And that means that MILA faculty have to hope and pray that they get the required number of students because if numbers are short, then their course will be canceled at the last minute,” said Miller.

At Muhlenberg, under typical circumstances, full-time professors are required to teach three classes a semester. So, if a MILA gets canceled at the last minute, professors have to scramble to teach another class the upcoming semester. If they fail to find a new class to teach, they are required to teach an additional course in a future semester. Miller discusses her situation in finding another class, along

with Professor of Neuroscience, Jeremy Teissiere, Ph.D. and Associate Professor of Theater, Matt Moore, Ph.D., and how luckily they were all able to work it out. However, this doesn’t mean it’s automatically the case for all faculty members.

Miller continued, giving a holistic perspective, stating, “It’s not ideal to put faculty in a position where a class could be canceled. This is especially true for MILAs where faculty have already spent hours and hours of time arranging lodging, transportation, field trips and guest speakers. The Potomac MILA, by the way, had 12 students enrolled, and I was told that Muhlenberg had never previously canceled a MILA with that many students enrolled in it.” She then added, “If Muhlenberg wants to support MILAs and encourage faculty to design one of these classes and trips, then perhaps we need to commit to running a MILA even if numbers are lower than the handbook mandates.”

There is a lot that is unfortunately still unknown about the new MILA guidelines, but as previously noted, there seem to be changes in the strictness regarding enrollment rates that are bound to have large implications on the MILA program.

There also seems to be a change in initial deposit amounts for students.

Furge, in collaboration with Morgan, touched on one of the new changes to the MILA program saying, “For students to count as enrolled in a MILA they must put down a [now] \$100 deposit. If a MILA is canceled, the deposit is refunded.”

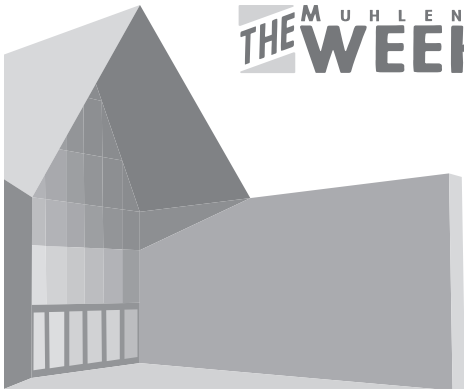
Still, students have overwhelmingly positive, nuanced experiences with the MILA program across various MILAs. Harli Strauss-Cohn ‘24 touched upon their experience in Bangladesh, stating, “My overall MILA experience was a good one though I had complex feelings about the structuring of the course and found traveling like this to be a fascinating experience. Not for any explicitly bad reasons it was just new and different to be in a foreign country with a group of classmates and professors.”

Noah Halterman-Mitchell ‘24 also commented on his MILA experience in Bangladesh. “The trip itself was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. We met Nobel prize winners, talked to leaders from massive think tanks and NGOs, traveled and saw first-hand the destruction that climate change has caused and continues to cause in the parts of the world that are

currently experiencing the most severe consequences of climate change.”

Though the Bangladesh MILA doesn’t run anymore, students consistently speak highly of their experiences. When asked why the MILA came to an end, Professor of Political Science, Mohsin Hashim, Ph.D., who ran the MILA with Professor of Political Science, Jack Gambino, Ph.D., stated that “it just ran its course,” shortly followed by “all good things must come to an end, right?”

As of now, students are not able to openly view this handbook, and are arguably left in the dark surrounding the new guidelines. This may affect the study abroad experience of all students choosing to partake in the MILA program, an integral part of Muhlenberg’s study abroad program.



THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY

ARTS & CULTURE

“An artist must be free to choose what he does, certainly, but he must also never be afraid to do what he might choose”

- Langston Hughes

New director helms “Head Over Heels” production

Intimacy Coordinator Alessandra Fanelli replaces Dan Kutner as director

PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY '27



“Head over Heels” will open on Apr. 18 at the Dorothy Hess Baker Theatre.

BY SARAH WEDEKING
MANAGING EDITOR

On Friday, Feb. 16, the company was informed that former Director and Adjunct Professor Daniel Kutner abruptly left the “Head Over Heels” production due to directorial differences. Intimacy Coordinator Alessandra Fanelli is set to replace the director, though many are still apprehensive about the recent changes made.

In response to stepping up to this new role, Fanelli said, “I’m genuinely honored to be a part of this collaborative effort. Working alongside passionate individuals makes the process both rewarding and exhilarating.”

“It’s definitely a little scary going into a new process since change is always scary but the company has such talent and skill that I think we will be alright,” said a company member who, like most of the students we spoke to, asked to remain anonymous due to high tensions among the company.

The two student assistant directors, Aidan White ‘25 and C.J. McDonald ‘24, and dramaturg Rowan Joyce ‘24 will also have a larger role in the production.

“While I’m excited to have more queer people and students at the helm of this production, this period of transition is creating an extremely stressful environment,” said another company member. “I hope that moving forward, the company receives the respect and professionalism we have put into the space from the beginning.”

“I feel more comfortable with a new direction as I think there were some previous directorial choices that made me uncomfortable so I’m glad they are changing while making everyone’s comfortability and safety come first,” said a third member of the company.

“Because of us voicing our discontent with the choices that were made,” a fourth company member explained, “he made the decision to leave on his own.”

In leaving the production, Kutner also left his directing class. Professor of Directing, Performance Studies, and Theatre History James Peck, Ph.D will take over, coming out of a sabbatical to do so.

“We’re going to spend the first class filling [Peck] in on what we’ve done so far, and then he’ll move forward from there,” said Emma Walter ‘24. “He’s not going to attempt to finish [Kutner’s] curriculum but rather see how to move forward with his own approach after seeing where we are.”

Some students expressed that they were uncomfortable in Kutner’s class. “It felt like us students were doing more educating than we should’ve been,” an anonymous student said. According to several students, he did not know the definition of “gender-fluid” despite one of the main “Head Over Heels” characters identifying as such.

The original Broadway production of “Head Over Heels,” which centers on a lot of queer identities, featured the first openly transgender Broadway performer. “For a queer show with a majority queer cast, I do not believe [Kutner] was do-

ing the show justice considering his own identities and backgrounds,” an anonymous company member said.

Many company members agreed that some of Kutner’s directorial choices were playing into harmful queer stereotypes, including over-sexualization. In some of the set designs, he wanted to illustrate explicit sexual imagery. “Sometimes we felt, like a majorly queer cast, that a lot of queer stereotypes were often being used,” one company member said.

According to another company member, the company ultimately came together to voice their concerns about the production. After a conversation with some of the cast and production team, they made it clear that some directorial changes needed to be made. These changes include taking away some of Kutner’s design choices— from utilizing representations of modern-day media to some of the over-sexualization on stage. Kutner left after this.

In the process of selecting a guest director, Director of the Co-Curriculum for Theatre & Dance Robyn Watson said, “It is simply that we look to directors within the department first and then we research for other guests when there is a need for directing to be filled for the season.”

Guest artists and directors are brought, according to the Muhlenberg College website, to provide opportunities for students to work and study with “world-class artists-in-residence.”

Yet this is not the first time people have had qualms with guest directors. “I think that with guest directors, it be-

comes a challenge when they are not experienced working with the students,” said Tomomi Lewis-Noguchi ‘24, who played Jesus in “...And Jesus Moonwalks the Mississippi.” “I got a lot of support from faculty I had known for a while because the trust was already there, whereas it was never really built with the director, making the really heavy parts of the show difficult to work on.”

Despite this mid-production transition, many believe Fanelli will be a good choice. “[Fanelli] was someone who was helping us throughout that process and had an understanding of what wasn’t working for us and what we needed,” said a company member. “But she’s also been involved... and seems very passionate about the show.”

“I’m looking forward to seeing what she does as a director,” they added. Although Fanelli is the new director, the company is still knee-deep in the production process. According to one company member, they hope that there will be an “extension of grace and patience” as the production continues.

Fanelli said, “I wholeheartedly believe that our combined efforts will result in a truly memorable production that is rooted in representation, self-discovery, love and celebration.”

“Head Over Heels” will be premiering Apr. 18-21 in the Baker Theater.

A political science major’s views on art

By SHINAM HUSSAIN
ARTS & CULTURE EDITOR

Art takes many forms. Whether it be literature, fine art, performance art, studio art and so on, art is all around us. It is used as a form of expression. For many, when thinking about art, we are trying to understand it through the lens of the artist, and what emotions and feelings they are trying to convey and evoke. I have found that through observing various art forms, a lot of art is a reflection of the current political and social climate of the time.

In observing art at Muhlenberg, I have found that many pieces have had either underlying or overt political commentary weaved in. Whether it be observing art at the Martin Art Gallery, or watching a performance put on in the Studio Theater, I have walked away with more insight on how artistic expression is hand-in-hand with the environment art is created in.

When the “Glut and Guzzle” exhibit was on display in the Baker Center for the Arts (CA) Galleria, there were many different opinions surrounding it, because of how provocative the art seemed to be. When the artist, Ashe Kaye, came to deliver a talk about the exhibit and their messaging in the art, it was clear that the directness of their sculptures and photographs was intentional, and discomfort was a welcome feeling. There was an overarching theme of gender expression



“The Souper Dress” by Campbell’s Soup Company on display at the Allentown Art Museum in 2023.

and acceptance, and the discomfort audiences may have felt observing the exhibit was intended. It was to evoke conversation around gender expression in modern society, and where our discomfort with blunt portrayals of gender stems from. So while at first glance an observer may not see the exhibit as reflective of the social climate of our time, the display was inherently political, from its messaging down to the feeling it created in the observer.

Along with fine art, performance art has been proven to incorporate different political messaging in itself. Muhlenberg’s “In Motion” 2024 included a piece titled, “The Alchemy of Bantaba,” and this served as a commentary on white-dominating dance styles, white supremacy, resistance and solidarity. This was a dance piece that sought to convey the intersectionality of dance, and how artists and dancers of color have resisted white hegemony and have found solidarity together.

When trying to understand an art form, it is typical to try and dissect the meaning from the artist’s lens: what they were feeling, and what they wished for us to feel. Art is intimate and personal, and it is often viewed as a look into someone’s brain or someone’s heart. This is a large reason art contains so many political and social themes. Politics is inherent to everything we do, especially in modern society, so it is foolish to believe that artists are not incorporating political themes in

their craft, in one way or another. Even in fashion, we have seen how this is an art that is heavily influenced by a period’s political and social climate. In a now archived exhibit in the Allentown Art Museum, there was an exhibit titled “Fashion as Experiment: the 60s” which was dedicated to examining fashion and how it was inspired by young people’s attitudes to the American government at that time.

Thriftng, along with experimenting with styles that were not gender normative were both large presences in the fashion scene in the ‘60s. This was to reflect how the youth of the time were deeply dissatisfied with the government, so their way of rebellion was through their clothing. Art is in the clothes we wear, and the political and social signaling hidden in that is another way that shows how politics and art are so intertwined.

Muhlenberg is known as a campus rich in the arts. Performance arts, fine arts and literary arts, you name it. At a school with so much art all around us, it can make our experience here so much more insightful and enlightening to recognize how multifaceted the art around us is. There is much more messaging and meaning in the art we consume intentionally and unintentionally. Politics and art are both two constructs that are inherent to us as people; they find a way into our lives without us even realizing.

Destigmatizing poetry

The Young Poets Society hopes to form a welcoming community of writers.

By HARRY GLICKLIN
COPY EDITOR

In their first semester, a group of five first-year friends found that they had a connection– they all liked to write poetry. And on Jan. 31, those same students stood at the front of the General Assembly of Muhlenberg’s Student Government Association (SGA), who voted to instate the Young Poets Society as one of the College’s newest clubs.

Not having a poetry club on campus, according to the club’s Vice President Catherine Poff ‘27, was shocking. As students at a liberal arts institution, she continued, “We express ourselves in so many different ways, so I think it was very crucial to be able to have a poetry club on campus for those who express themselves through poetry.”

Founder and President Avani Gupta ‘27 agreed, reflecting on just how much of a call there may be for this club. “If I’m able to find, just within my friend group, so many people who appreciate poetry, I’m sure there [are] other people out there that I haven’t talked to who really appreciate poetry too.” She also commented on how “cool” it would be for this space to exist, for people to come together and bond over writing.

The name of the club was derived, naturally, from the acclaimed film “Dead Poets Society,” which depicts a group of teenage boys who at once hated poetry, but when presented with a passionate, influential teacher, grew to find deep love in poetry, understanding its meaning and building relationships. The Young Poets Society hopes to provide all of that to an audience of those who are “still kind of learning where [they] stand in writing

and poetry,” Gupta explains.

The two took to poetry in various ways. Gupta sought out poetry as a way to fit in, to make friends, and as she grew older, said it helped her “process [her] feelings.” “It’s like taking the ugliest feelings and parts of yourself and then putting it in pretty packaging with language to present it to people acceptably,” she added. Adding to the sentiment of writing for fun, Gupta reflected, “I don’t really call myself a ‘poet,’ but I call myself ‘someone who writes poetry.’”

Poff found poetry as a way to aid in her ability to communicate with others, something she said she has struggled with in the past due to growing up with a speech impediment. “Poetry was kind of a way that I could say exactly what I wanted to say.”

Now, the club is setting their sights on the future. The Young Poets Society executive board consists of Gupta, Poff, Secretary Lauren Fluckiger ‘27, Treasurer Johnny Rappoccio ‘27 and Public Relations Head Molly Terdman ‘27.

Gupta commented on de-stigmatization as one of their main goals. “[Poetry] has this reputation of always having to be super deep and always having to be super philosophical and about all of these huge topics... It doesn’t have to be ‘good,’ it doesn’t have to be ‘publication-worthy,’ it can just be something you write,” Poff added.


“Poetry can just be poetry,” she said, “Ultimately, the club’s goal is to be able to create a space where people who love poetry can connect with each other and appreciate the art.”

Their first event, a “Hot Chocolate So-

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MILES P. GRIER



February 29, 2024
Moyer Hall, Miller Forum, 7:00 PM
“Inkface: *Othello* and Interpretive Authority”

Miles P. Grier is an associate professor of English at Queens College and the Graduate Center, CUNY. He is the author of the Inkface: Othello and White Authority in the Era of Atlantic Slavery (University of Virginia Press 2023) and co-editor of Early Modern Black Diaspora Studies (Palgrave 2018). His essays on Shakespearean material have appeared in William and Mary Quarterly and the volumes Scripturalizing the Human; The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Race; Shakespeare/Text; and Masquerade: Scripturalizing Modernities through Black Flesh. Essays on more contemporary North American topics such as racial profiling after 9/11, Joni Mitchell’s blackface pimp alter ego, President Obama’s approach to Black voters, and playwright August Wilson’s intentional marginalization of white racism have appeared in Politics and Culture, Genders the Journal of Popular Music Studies, and the LA Review of Books, respectively.

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Film spotlight: Amira Jackson ‘24

By Emma Northrop
Senior Staff Writer

A theatre and film studies double major, Amira Jackson ‘24 has always had a passion for film and music videos but didn’t realize she wanted to create them until her senior year of high school. Forced into isolation by the pandemic, Jackson found her calling behind the silver screen. She recalls, “I remember watching countless movies, music videos and films during those many weeks of lockdown. And I began thinking to myself that making a film didn’t actually seem that hard. So I decided that I wanted to give it a try and I saved up to buy a camera. I started photographing and videotaping many things and fell in love with creating through the lens of a camera. Overtime, I have come to learn that making a film is indeed very, very hard, but my passion for creating has never wavered.”

Since beginning her journey behind the camera, Jackson has made a total of five films. With each one, both her passion and skill have grown. Recently, Jackson won Best Horror of 2024 from the KUUMBA Black Arts and Film Festival for the “Cycle of Women” film she created while studying in Prague. “Some are projects that I cringe watching, but they remind me of where I started and how much I’ve grown. As an artist, it’s important to sometimes look back on what you’ve created because it can also help you see patterns,” she advises.

By looking back on her previous films, Jackson realized a common theme, “Every film I made was challenging the way we perceive and talk about race. Knowing that my creative mind was subconsciously wanting to tackle those issues has shaped how I made my last two films. Now that I’ve noticed that about myself I can be much more intentional about the

messages and themes I want people to know,” says Jackson.

Her upcoming film “The Figure,” continues this analysis of race. In the film, the main character, Joshua, moves to a new town with his mother. There, “he endures a battle of having Christianity and whiteness forced onto him and must find his own freedom within or succumb to the beliefs around him,” describes Jackson.

The film has an abundance of personal significance for Jackson, who grew up in a faith-based family. In explaining her reasoning behind writing the film, Jackson says, “I remember in high school learning about slavery. I was baffled at how large of a role Christianity played in such a gruesome event. I couldn’t process that my family celebrated and believed in the same religion that was forced down the throats of our ancestors. It was a religion that was used as another form of bondage to keep Africans enslaved for many many years.”

Jackson continued to recount her struggles with this information, stating, “For a while I turned my back on anything related to God or Christianity because it felt contradictory and hypocritical to follow a religion that harmed Black bodies.” However, coming to college at Muhlenberg gave her a new perspective, as she learned about Africa’s long history before colonization and how Christianity was practiced in multiple places, such as Ethiopia. “It changed the way I viewed my relationship to religion. It showed me that Christianity has a very complex position in the history of Africans and African Americans. Since learning that, I’ve begun creating my own relationship with spirituality and learning about ways to infuse African traditions and understanding into the way I practice Christianity,” she shares.

While much of Jackson’s inspiration came from lived experience, she was also heavily inspired by the film “Ganja and Hess.” Jackson explains, “I think my creative process sometimes varies depending on the genre of film I’m making. But I would say when I get inspiration for films it always comes in images. I always see an image before knowing the exact story!” Weeks after watching “Ganja and Hess,” Jackson remembers dreaming about a cross being nailed to the ground. She elaborates, “After waking up I couldn’t get the image out of my head, and eventually the story of Joshua emerged from that image I kept seeing.”

After the period of initial inspiration, Jackson states, “I began writing beats or significant moments that I knew I wanted in the film regardless of what the overarching story was. Once I solidified those beats, I began working on a script and the rest is history.”

To Jackson, film is as much an art form as a platform. “Film is a medium that was once used to mock, exploit and dehumanize the African American community. And I see the films I make, and the films that other Black folks are making, as a passage of reclamation! Black films are a tribute to the African American people, it’s like saying, ‘I hear you, I see

you and I adore you,” she explains. Looking to celebrate Black bodies in her own film, she communicates, “I remember seeing a quote that there are very few films that zoom in on the faces of Black people, and very rarely do we get to see the intricacies of Black people. So while creating this film I kept that quote with me and I reminded myself of how important it is to show the complexities, but also the beauty of what it means to be Black. I did everything in my power to make sure there were Black and brown

SEE FILM PAGE 10



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Does anyone even care that we’re still live on air?

By Emma Ash
Contributing Writer

In 2011, Vanderbilt’s college radio station, WRVU shut its doors. Over five decades of broadcasting over public airwaves were halted and WRVU was purchased by an NPR classical music station. I learned about last semester when Katherine Rye Jewell, Ph.D., a history professor at Fitchburg State University, visited Muhlenberg to talk about the history of college radio and mentioned the shuttering of Vanderbilt’s college radio station, her alma mater. It was shocking to hear that WRVU’s history as student DJ-curated, in the margin-style underground music was pushed to an online-only format. It felt like Jewell’s story was ringing alarm bells. For colleges, historical media formats like college radio are at risk.

Muhlenberg College’s radio station, WMUH, is a beloved 24/7 freeform station run by students and community DJs. WMUH proudly houses approximately 29 student DJs and 25 community DJs on air. Many of these community DJs have hosted a show at WMUH for years.

WMUH is living history. Its DJs contribute to a larger living memory of sharing music in a creative, experimental fashion. To its DJs, college radio feels a “public service” to curate shows for anyone interested. In its heyday, WMUH DJs were known as taste-makers, valued heavily by audiences and record labels to play newly released songs. College radio was the outlet the public turned to for new



WMUH’s Production Studio in Walson Hall sits empty.

releases, alternative music and underground acts. Today, college DJs’ meaningful curation stands out within a world of commercialized, homogenized music.

WMUH’s DJs showcase their voices and lesser-known artists to anyone who’s listening. The station hosts a plethora of live music to expand the palettes of students on campus and aims to uplift student artist voices, which receives high praise and attendance from the campus community. WMUH appears significant to the music community on campus as they’re a part of late-night concerts and hypno-cow stickers on students’ laptops.

While students seem to know about WMUH, this does not necessarily mean that they actually listen. Even though WMUH feels alive to its DJs and to some

regard, students, WMUH is lacking the draw it used to have. In 2017, about 20 percent of students responded to a survey saying they’ve listened to WMUH and 10 percent of students were unaware of WMUH’s existence. As a station that used to pull in up to an average of 10,000 listeners, it’s shocking to hear that only a few students are listening at any given time.

College radio is an aging technology, dying out among streaming services. Music consumption habits have changed, with more than 616.2 million music streaming subscriptions in 2022. There is a draw to play on-demand, popular content that outweighs a college station’s dedication to introducing unknown music. People want to hear what they do

know, rather than listening to new music. It is also less likely for someone to hear something for the first time on college radio, meaning college radio is no longer seen as a hub for discovering new, underground music. As a result, stations are losing funding or are bought out by corporations to play pre-programmed playlists. Radio exists within the confines of its historical upbringing. It uses tired technology and equipment which makes it hard to fit within the changing economy of tailored music consumption. With this, college radio has lost its initial sparkle and appeal.

Despite the decline in listeners, I believe students should invest in the traditions and heart of radio. While college radio is a vulnerable medium, it is an important bridge between current and past DJs. WMUH DJs care about their station. WMUH fosters an unforgettable, inclusive community through community events like concerts and programming, even if WMUH’s reach is not as widespread as it used to be. Tuning into WMUH brings voices of DJs who are passionate about what they play —their curation and dedicated Lehigh Valley listeners are what helps WMUH stick around. However, the future of Muhlenberg radio feels uncertain after the recent downfall of the historic Muhlenberg’s Ciarla Yearbook in its traditional format. Our campus should be asking the question, what could we lose next?



By Megan Hansen & Emily Nally
Campus Voices Team

Dear Readers of the Muhlenberg Weekly,

Upon recently rebranding the Campus Voices section, The Muhlenberg Weekly has aimed to prioritize the expansion of voices showcased in our paper. We feel it is extremely important to promote peer education - gaining new perspectives through the words and actions of our classmates. That is why we are extremely excited to introduce to you a new series of articles brought to you by enACT and other collaborators. This series will cover the importance of practicing sustainability on campus, raising awareness about the intersectionality of environmental issues and how it pertains to our students.

For those who are not familiar, enACT is Muhlenberg’s Environmental Action Team which advocates for sustainability on campus. According to member Jessica Rosen ‘24, “Pre-pandemic, enACT was an active club which branched into smaller clubs with specific interests. When the pandemic hit, it became difficult to maintain enACT so it turned dormant. Students came together to revitalize and reroot the club to collaborate with as many groups as possible to show how sustainability affects us in so many ways and pertains to everyone’s life.” enACT has over 200 members and spans all areas of academic interest. You may have heard of them through the buzz surrounding their popular events, namely, our favorite, the clothing swap - a free event where students can refresh their closets and donate clothing, to give them a new life. The re-

maining donations are distributed to the Allentown School District (ASD).

From the clothing swap came a new initiative, which hones in on their goal to educate their peers on the immediate effect of sustainability. “Muhlenberg is a small school but 2,000 people is a lot of people that still create a lot of waste. Institutionally changing the way the school as a whole functions from a more sustainable lens is important,” said Anna Weiss ‘26. Robin Title ‘25 adds, “At Muhlenberg, I feel like people acknowledge enACT as the environmental club and the ones that handle sustainability, but we all live on this Earth. This is not just stuff that members of enACT should do- it’s something that we can all strive for.”

That’s why enACT has partnered with the Panhellenic Council, Mental Health Peer Advocates (MHPA), The Historical Dress Society, Peer Health Advocates and the Body Positivity Club to showcase the prominence of sustainable practices in each of their areas of focus through the lens of fast fashion. The clubs will host a series of events throughout the semester which will promote conscious purchasing. Events will focus on sustainability beyond simply environmental issues that fast fashion poses, and how it relates to each of these organizations. Rosen said something that really resonated about this initiative, and drove us to think about why it has the potential to positively impact the campus community - “Sustainability can generally be characterized by social, economic and environmental impacts. This semester-long initiative targets all of these areas- touching upon

accessibility, ethics, mental health and more - and seeing how all of these engage and interact with each other.”

Upon talking to the representatives of each of these organizations, it has become clear to us that so much has already been learned. Libey Eynan ‘25 of MHPA spoke about the mentality behind impulse buying and Ella Rolin ‘25 of The Historical Dress Society spoke of the ever-changing attitude surrounding clothes and wardrobe habits throughout the years. Each representative spoke extensively about why they are passionate about opening themselves up to a mindset they may have otherwise been closed off from since partnering with enACT.

“One of enACT’s main points is to emphasize the intersectionality of sustainability that exists in everything that we do. We tend to have this overarching idea of fast fashion being bad, but we want to talk about it in as many facets as we can. Partnering with different organizations helps us specifically target these facets and further encourage wider amounts of students on campus to be aware,” Weiss pointed out.

A series of three articles presented throughout the course of the semester will, in correspondence with the events hosted by these organizations in collaboration with enACT, dive deeper into these topics and showcase the importance of the new initiative.

“Working with so many different groups, you can start with your own perspective on sustainability and then build off of it using what you already know. You can learn a lot from other people and the

things that they know” said Lindsey Adler ‘24.

Having enACT reach out to The Weekly about this series has been a refreshing reminder as to why we exist as an organization. We hope that through these articles you not only open your minds to these new perspectives and learn a thing or two about sustainability that you may not have known, but are inspired to share your own thoughts and mission statements with us that will contribute to facilitating a more widespread connection between students on campus.

We also hope that you attend these events, read these articles, and support enACT and these other organizations in their new and exciting initiative! You can view enACT’s events on Instagram @en-act.berg

Sincerely,
Megan Hansen and Emily Nally
Your Campus Voices Editors

Clio, Muse of History

after painting by Charles Meynier (French, 1768–1832)

By ILAN HAAS
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The muse of history sits
on a chipped slab of granite,
her wings discolored with blue and rust.
Dominating the foreground
is the likeness of a great warrior on his steed,
carved into stone and overgrown with vines.
A place of stillness;
no false serenity, no majestic terror,
only the stark weight of time and ruin.
Beyond looms
the shadows of columns and pyramids,
obscured by the murk
to be named or forgotten.
An iron tablet rests
on draped cloth folded across her thigh,
upheld by one hand.
The chisel hovers
glimmering a wink of foreshadowing,
poised to inscribe the dull golden letters.
Two eyes spear
a calm glare into the distance,
her lips are closed.
The grim face of knowledge,
an angel risen from dust,
her crown of leaves
the only vibrant thing.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MOLLY TERDIMAN '27



Young Poets Society members pose for a photo with individual projects.

FROM **POETRY** PAGE 6

cial,” included drinking hot chocolate and making blackout poetry, a practice that Gupta considers as being accessible to those who are intimidated by poetry. “You can pick up something that’s already written, black a few words out and you have a poem.”
The event, Gupta and Poff agree, was a great success. The two commented on how great it was, not only to work on craft but to gather together, “see new faces... and [be] able to connect with them.”
Though they don’t have a second event scheduled yet, Gupta stated that they’re excited about the prospect of holding a song lyric analysis, especially with the “perfect” announcement of Taylor Swift’s album “The Tortured

Poets Department” arriving in April.
The Young Poets Society also hopes to close out their first semester with a larger event of poetic appreciation— for the poetry and the poets. “We do, ideally, want to end the semester with an open mic or an anonymous poetry night, so people can share their original works,” Gupta concluded.
Overall, the club hopes to be a welcoming community of people who enjoy poetry, and a safe space for destigmatizing the art form.



Men’s basketball season wrap-up: 2023-24

By LEXI SIPOS
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Muhlenberg men’s basketball finished their 2023-24 season on Feb. 19. After a literal coin-flip to determine the venue, they ended up hosting Dickinson in a “win-and-your-in” game to determine the sixth and final seed of this year’s Centennial Conference playoffs. Unfortunately, the Mules lost in a close contention (70-67) with a score reflective of a tough battle.

The Mules were down in the first half, but they persevered, gaining 14 points to tie the game. The energy was high, and there was consistent resilience displayed by the Mules. In the second half, the team came back from being down to earn eight points. Giovanni Rubino ‘24 left it all on the court. With 2:32 left in the second half, he brought the Mules the tie they were looking for. Although they lost by three points, the whole game embodied their consistent enthusiasm and teamwork towards a common goal.

Brandon Goldberg ‘24 and Rubino, are graduating in May of this year and not returning to Muhlenberg. Their lack of presence will not go unnoticed. Drew Greene ‘26 commented, “The im-

pact that the seniors had on this program is hard to put into words. Rubino and Goldberg are both super-skilled players on the court, but I think how they impacted us the most was off the court. To be in their presence almost all the time throughout the day was truly special and felt meaningful. They both bring such different personalities to the program that help benefit and bring our team together as a family. Even though we lost and didn’t have as great of a year as we expected, it taught us a lot. We went through a lot of adversity this season and honestly still stuck together through it all. Losing sucks in general but being able to feel that emotion and learn from it is the most important skill an athlete can have. I think our team is super excited for next year and is going to be ready to work to our full potential.”

Ultiately, the seniors’ mentality and energy will leave a legacy for the underclassmen to carry on. Their season had all the elements on and off the court that symbolize a successful team culture. Although the team lost, they will cherish the tenacity and team camaraderie they shared this season for time to come and ultimately use it to push them into their next season.



Giovanni Rubino ‘24

FROM FILM PAGE 7

bodies involved in front of the camera, but also behind the camera. And I hope the audience can see and appreciate that effort!”

Beyond this, she also hopes that the audience will be moved to discussion after her film. “I hope that the audience will engage in conversations about religions [versus] spirituality... and recognize that, although race is a social construct, it is very real and has been intertwined into our basic understandings of the world. I hope that people will understand that race is a hard thing to grapple with and that we all have our individual journeys,” she expresses.

In working on this film, Jackson shares that she hopes to gain understanding of her craft, experience as a filmmaker, and

increase her impact. She comments, “I believe that film is a form of art that is learned through doing, the more you do the more you learn!”

She reflects on how it feels to be making her own film, stating “It comes with a lot of weight, but it also feels so affirming! I didn’t make this film happen on my own.” While this film is born of Jackson’s experience, she asserts that it is the work of many creative individuals on campus. She elaborates, “I had the help of Jonathan Mindiak ‘24, Lorenzo Antigua ‘24, Desiree Oliver ‘25, Rachelle Montilus ‘24 and so many more. And it made me overjoyed to know that there were so many people that believed in this story and wanted to help me make it happen! The story was and still is mine, but

the film belongs to everyone because it took everyone in order for it to come to fruition.”

For those interested in the film, Jackson shares how you can get involved. She outlines, “In April 2024 myself, Rev. Janelle Nauber, and a few other student organizations will be collaborating to screen ‘The Figure’ on campus with some curated programming!” For those looking to support the film or screening Jackson encourages you to reach out to her via email at ajackson@muhlenberg.edu. She expresses “We hope that the campus body will come to show their support.”

Men’s lacrosse spring season opener

By OLIVIA OBERMAN
SPORTS EDITOR

This past Saturday, Feb. 17, the Muhlenberg men’s lacrosse team opened their spring season in an away game against Stevenson University. The matchup resulted in a 15-10 loss, however, the Mules revealed great effort, potential and talent.

Captain, two-time preseason All-American, and first-team All-Centennial Conference recipient Matthew Regan ‘24 said, “Although the game did not end in our favor, I believe Saturday’s game only further proved to the team how talented we really are. We have a very young team and we will continue to improve even further in the coming weeks and months.”

Following the farewell of a very large and impactful senior class last year, a lot of space has been created for new and returning players to step into key roles this season. This year, the program welcomed a class of 19 first-years. Within the first game, several of those newcomers took such opportunities to showcase talent and their commitment to success.

Daniel Friedel ‘27 scored four goals against the Mustangs on Saturday. According to Muhlenberg Athletics, Friedel tied for the second-most goals scored by a first-year in their first career game in Muhlenberg men’s lacrosse program history. Additionally, Liam Ledwith ‘27 had two goals in his first career game.

Last year, the Mules went 11-6 overall. Their season ended in an overtime battle against Franklin

& Marshall College in the first round of Centennial Conference playoffs. Although the loss cut their championship climb short, it was a signal in itself of historical progress. That game served as the first home conference playoff game the Mules had ever hosted in program history. The whistle that ended that game is the same one that has driven the team to prepare for this season.

“We have the same goal every year, which is to win a conference championship. I believe a big strength we have is that our team has a new identity. We have a lot of new guys here to pick up from where we left off last year. The last few years we came up just short and we’re looking to change that this year with new faces and a new team culture,” said Captain, 2024 pre-season All-American and 2021 Centen-

nial Conference Rookie of the Year Wyatt Malia ‘24.

The program’s strong culture has remained a constant foundation for them in years past. Several players have spoken independently on the advantageous strength of their current team chemistry.

Regan added, “I believe our biggest strength is our team chemistry and how close everyone is. Although we have a very talented roster, I believe the love we have for each other and the team as a whole will prove to be the most valuable asset to our success.”

Captain Jack Taub ‘24 continued, “Being part of this lacrosse team feels like being part of a tight-knit family. As we gear up for the upcoming season, our chemistry on and off the field is palpable. Together, we’re ready

to tackle any challenge and strive for victory.”

The team’s resilience is already shining through in their positive, immediate response after this weekend. Their next game will take place on Wednesday, Feb. 21 at Scranton University.

Captain Ryan May ‘24 summed it up well, “We’re focused on bouncing back and have been working really hard this week in practice and the weight room. It’s a long season and we know we’re going to take our bumps along the way but I’m confident in our team’s ability to play and win big games.”

Berg’s cheer team resilience

By Abby Scheidel and Emma Gobora
Rookie Writers

Muhlenberg cheer is a club through the Student Government Association (SGA), not an official sport at Muhlenberg. They have the opportunity to cheer for both the football and men’s basketball teams. Despite this, the team is still motivated to work hard and improve each season to reach their goals. “We aim to have two practices a week with stunting and 1-2 lifts per week and then games are either on the weekdays or the weekends if it’s football season,” said Captain Kristin Huenink ’24.

One challenge the team faces is finding the space needed for practice and scheduling it through the athletics department. The cheer team goes through the athletic department to get access to the Life Sports Center’s field house for practice time. “We are a lower priority than other sports so we take the time we can get with the coverage we can receive,” said Huenink.

Funding has been a constraint for the team because they are more responsible for it as individuals. “An example of something we may want to buy, as a team, is more practice shirts or a Universal Cheer Association (UCA) instructor-led stunt clinic. Since our cheer budget is largely based on the money we raise it’s dependent on how generous tailgaters feel during the football season home game raffles. We are grateful to have opportunities such as Mule Madness and raffles to help our funding,” Huenink explained.

The cheer team does not compete, so it can be difficult to keep motivation levels high throughout the sea-

sons. “We have different people from different experience levels. Some people are from the competitive experience level and some people are not and having a competition in the future is helpful because then you have an actual concrete goal to work toward and motivate you to become better. But overall I think we are happy with [performing] for the football and basketball teams alone,” said Huenink.

There has also been a struggle to recruit new team members, as the team has no real recruitment process. Huenink said, “It has definitely lessened in the numbers over the years. We have been trying to really get the awareness up the last couple of years, letting people know that we exist and are trying to get new people in.”

There is still more work to be done and Huenink and her squad plan on continuing to prove themselves. “It has been a pretty positive [experience] overall, we had to replace the coach due to scheduling conflicts and commitment levels, but this new coach has really helped us get back to where we want to be and provide motivation for the team to be better and to show up. We still need to work on communication, working toward a common goal, setting expectations for ourselves and others and motivation levels. Our season is technically from August to mid-February so it is pretty long to be doing something without a break,” Huenink explained.



Cheer team members attend a basketball game.

Attention Class of 2024!
The Muhlenberg Weekly is taking over the Ciarla yearbook with the creation of a digital yearbook. All seniors should fill out the Google Form by using the QR code next to this message. We look forward to your responses and creating something special for our senior class.

The Weekly’s Ciarla



MUHLENBERG THEATRE & DANCE



ARTISTIC DIRECTOR:
GABRIEL JASON DEAN

FEB 29 - MAR 3, 2024

-IN-CHIEF

by Ally Duvak '22
directed by Jessie Dean

The editor of a college newspaper struggles to protect the status quo as the 2016 presidential election looms.

THE HAUNTING OF HARTFIELD HALL

by Lottie Segal '23
directed by Jim VanValen

Gender norms and a persistent ghost push Lee to come to terms with his transgender identity. For Young Audiences.

MUHLENBERG.EDU/SEEASHOW

New beginnings at Bicentennial Park

Bicentennial Park to be the new home for Muhlenberg’s baseball program come 2025.

REDNERING COURTESY OF ALLENTOWN CITY COUNCIL.



A rendering of the proposed renovation of Bicentennial Park.

By EVAN SCHLOTTERBECK
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

At a recent Allentown City Council meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 7, Muhlenberg College and the City of Allentown reached an agreement on a resolution to turn the stadium at Earl F. Hunsicker Bicentennial Park into the Muhlenberg baseball program’s new home beginning in the spring of 2025. The City approved a ten-year lease on the property, which could eventually end up being extended another 20 years, seeing the College pay \$15,000 a year in rent over that span and requiring it to spend up to \$4 million in investments to renovate and refurbish the vacant land over the next five years.

Built in 1939 and originally named Fairview Field, Bicentennial Park has been home to many baseball and softball teams at various levels, including professional leagues. From 1997 to 2003, it was home to the Allentown Ambassadors of the independent Northeast League, then eventually hosting the Allentown Railers of the Atlantic Collegiate Baseball League from 2012 to 2019. Baseball has seeped into Allentown out of Bicentennial Park for decades, adding to the significance of the Mules’ recently approved venture.

According to an article from Lehigh-ValleyNews.com, the stadium is currently unusable and has not held games for five years, so this project will benefit both the Mules and the City of Allentown. In the College’s press release, President Kathleen Harring said, “We’re really proud of our partnership with the city on this project. This is what happens when we all

strive together for the common good. It’s going to be an outstanding ballfield once again. I look forward to seeing the Mules play there.”

The stadium is located on Lehigh and South Howard Streets on the south side of the city and is situated within a neighborhood, making it an enticing spot for investment into recreational infrastructure. The newly renovated stadium will not exclusively hold Muhlenberg baseball matchups but also host free monthly community baseball clinics, service projects and other volunteer opportunities to grow the game of baseball. “It’s going to add not only to our student-athletes’ experience but also to the neighborhood,” said Harring to Muhlenberg Athletics. “We’re looking forward to welcoming friends and neighbors for games, clinics and all the other activities we’re planning.”

The work on the property, stadium and playing surface will be completed in two phases. The first phase will include reconditioning both the infield and outfield, demolishing sections of bleachers to allow for new batting cages and bullpens and refurbishing outfield fencing, restrooms and dugouts. The second phase will consist of renovations to interior spaces like offices, locker rooms and concession stands.

“For me, the most exciting thing about Bicentennial Park is what this move has the potential to do for our program,” said Tod Gross, who is entering his 12th season as head coach of Muhlenberg baseball. “We will be able to have multiple opportunities throughout the year to

have camps, clinics and showcases that will bring prospective student-athletes not just to Bicentennial Park but also to campus. We will be able to host many events to aid in recruiting without having to go on the road. This will allow us to showcase a great facility to recruits. We will also be practicing and playing in one of the better [Division III] facilities in the country.”

This project is a testament to the hard work, discipline and passion for the program that previous Muhlenberg baseball players and coaches have shown over the years. While it is exciting to see both Allentown and Muhlenberg invest in this rejuvenation, it will be a bittersweet moment as ‘Berg bids goodbye to what has been its home since 1997, the Lehigh County Sports Complex, or the “Creek,” a period that has seen Centennial Conference (CC) playoff berths, CC rookies-of-the-year and numerous home-runs and diving plays.

“This year, being the final one at the Creek, is going to be special for all of us from the upperclassmen down,” said Infielder Mason Mehling ‘26. “Especially Coach Gross, since this is all he knows from taking over 12 years ago. The goal for this year would be to host one last playoff game to send Cedar Creek Park off in fashion, but looking forward, the new field is going to be a great opportunity for all current and future players. All of the guys look forward to being able to call the new field home in the upcoming year.”

The goal for any ambitious and driven program is to bring home silverware, and the team has one more chance to capture

glory and commemorate the Creek. “One thing we talked about as a program when we got the news about moving to Bicentennial [Park] was reflecting upon all of the teams and players that have played at the ‘Creek’ over the years and taking on the responsibility to hopefully send it out on a high note,” said Gross.

“My favorite memory was sweeping Johns Hopkins my freshman year,” said Infielder Aidan Legner ‘25. We knew going into that doubleheader that it was going to be a battle, and we were able to come away with two wins on Senior Day.” Regardless of the results, the Creek will remain a significant part of Muhlenberg baseball’s history.

This innovative project indicates a new era in Muhlenberg baseball is right around the corner. “[The project] symbolizes a commitment to not only our baseball program but a commitment to what our baseball program and Muhlenberg College can do for the community as a whole,” stated Gross. “I think having such an amazing facility to practice and play in will be a huge asset to the program and the College, but also to the community. We will be able to host various youth events for the community and bring baseball back to Allentown.”

The Mules will open up their season on the road on Saturday, Feb. 24, against Rutgers-Newark, and will have their first home game of their final season at Cedar Creek Field on Monday, Mar. 4, against Rutgers-Camden.

Coming up this week in

SPORTS

Feb 22 - Feb 28

Men’s Tennis	Men’s Lacrosse	Track	Women’s Lacrosse
<div>MUHLENBERG vs SWARTHMORE</div> <div>Sat, Feb. 24 @ 10:00 a.m. Deitrich Field House</div>	<div>MUHLENBERG vs CLARKSON</div> <div>Sun, Feb. 24 @ 12:00 p.m. Scotty Wood Stadium</div>	<div>MUHLENBERG at CENTENNIAL CONFERENCE</div> <div>Sun, Feb. 25 @ 11:00 a.m. Lancaster, PA</div>	<div>MUHLENBERG at MISERICORDIA</div> <div>Sun, Feb. 28 @ 4:00 p.m. Varsity Field</div>

PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY '27



Haas houses Muhlenberg's financial aid office.

FAFSA delays put pressure on College and students

Changes to the FAFSA will push back its release this year.

BY KATHERINE CONLON
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

If you have applied to college in the United States after 1965, you are likely to have filled out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA is a government form used by both prospective and current students to calculate financial aid eligibility. On Dec. 30, 2023, the US Department of Education released a new version of this application, pioneered by the Biden administration through a bipartisan law passed in Congress in 2020. In addition to providing loan forgiveness for HB-CUs and restoring Pell Grants for incarcerated individuals, the law was also meant to streamline the FAFSA process.

However, this process has become anything but streamlined. A plan that was meant to limit the number of total questions on the form and simplify the formula used to calculate federal aid has been plagued with delays

and glitches. Now, colleges will have to wait until mid-March to receive students' FAFSA information. Typically colleges would receive this information at the beginning of the year. Now, institutions are working to find ways to present accepted students with their aid packages as soon as possible.

Vice President for Enrollment Management Megan Ryan shed some light on how these delays are affecting the College. She noted, "In previous years, an accepted student who had successfully submitted their FAFSA would get a financial aid offer the day they learned about their acceptance to Muhlenberg. This year it requires a little more back and forth with accepted students." Accepted students will receive their letter of admission as well as their merit-based aid, however, their need-based aid will not arrive in this initial package.

One of the ways that the College is adjusting to this delay lies

in the Student Aid Index (SAI). This refers to a score that students get after filling out that calculates an estimated amount of federal aid that they will receive. Ryan stated that "while we wait for those official records to come to us, accepted students can provide a copy of their submission confirmation that includes the SAI. We then use that information to provide the accepted student with an estimated financial aid offer."

In regards to how Muhlenberg is communicating with prospective students about these roadblocks, Ryan says that "We have hosted several webinars to help families understand these changes and our updated process for this year. We also sent applicants information about next steps along with our commitment to helping them through the process."

In light of these difficulties, the federal government has decided to ease some requirements. According to Inside

Higher Ed, these changes to requirements include the Department of Education "reduc[ing] the proportion of financial aid forms it reviews for potential inaccuracy, suspend[ing] all new reviews of colleges' compliance with financial aid rules and offer[ing] institutions flexibility in their applications to renew their eligibility to access federal financial aid programs."

These delays have shifted timelines for all American higher education institutions, with some even pushing back enrollment deadlines. Muhlenberg, however, has decided to not take this route. Explaining this decision, Assistant Director of Financial Aid Jessica Keller said, "Our enrollment team hasn't decided on pushing back any dates as of yet. That's obviously still a conversation that we're having, just to see kind of where the land lies when we do start receiving FAFSAs. A lot of it kind of depends on this effect of: will we see them (the FAFSAs) in a lump

sum or will they kind of trickle in slowly?"

Prospective students are not the only individuals who are affected by these delays, current students are also facing the consequences. Keller stated the current students shouldn't rush to complete the FAFSA and instead hold off until around mid-March to give the Financial Aid Office time to address the forms in groups, handling prospective students first, followed by current students. Keller said, "The only impact I think it would have in [terms of] timelines is that current students might not see their aid packages, as soon as they would have seen them in prior years. We're hoping that by early summer, we can have everything sorted so that students can log on to their financial aid portal and be able to see those offers reflective of the changes that were made for the FAFSA form."

Arts & Culture

"Berg New Works" festival takes the stage this weekend.
PAGE 6 & 7

Campus Voices

Leila Farzin '27 questions SGA votes.
PAGE 8

Sports

Women's lacrosse beats Moravian.
PAGE 11

THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY

Serving the Muhlenberg College Community since 1883

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The Muhlenberg Weekly strives for accuracy in reporting and writing, but we acknowledge that mistakes happen. Readers are invited to submit corrections about errors in articles, and they should be submitted to weeklyeditor@gmail.com. Corrections are also brought to our staff’s attention by our own editors and writers. Our staff will review the suggested correction, consult with the author of the article, and issue the appropriate correction. Online corrections are located at the bottom of the article. Print corrections are located within the paper, on the page indicated in the online edition. However, The Weekly does not grant take-down requests for articles.

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We request that advertising material be submitted by the Monday preceding publication at 5 p.m. If materials have not been received at that time, the advertisement will not run and the advertiser is still responsible for 100% payment. We reserve the right to decline any advertisement that is misleading, inaccurate, fraudulent, or deemed generally unacceptable. This determination will be made by the Business Staff in consultation with the Editor-in-Chief. The Muhlenberg Weekly maintains a distinction between its news & editorial content and advertising. As such, advertisements will not be accepted if they imitate the general style of The Weekly, intentionally or unintentionally. Examples of this include, but are not limited to: headlines, bylines, fonts, and column-arrangements. In order to make this distinction, The Weekly also reserves the right to include the word “advertisement” on any advertisement that is deemed too native.

CAMPUS SAFETY NOTES

2/20/24

Medical—Report of sick student in Baker Center for the Arts. MCEMS responded, AEMS responded and transported student to hospital.

Vandalism—Report of broken mirror in Brown. Unknown who vandalized mirror, HRL notified, and Plant Ops notified to remove broken glass.

2/21/24

College Policy—Report of covered smoke detector in M.I.L.E. House, cover removed by Campus Safety Officer.

2/22/24

Alarms—Report of fire alarm from cooking in South Hall, system silenced and reset.



Attention Class of 2024! The Muhlenberg Weekly is taking over the Ciarla yearbook with the creation of a digital yearbook. All seniors should fill out the Google Form by using the QR code next to this message. We look forward to your responses and creating something special for our senior class.

2024 Commencement Luncheon



dining.muhlenberg.edu

Immediately following commencement ceremonies, graduates, families and guests are invited to attend an all-you-care-to-eat buffet luncheon in the Wood Dining Commons.

Tickets:



Alumni spotlight: Zaire Carter ‘22

How Zaire Carter ‘22 went from Muhlenberg Student Government to the U.S. Senate.

By HARRY GLICKLIN
COPY EDITOR

Zaire Carter ‘22 currently works as the state scheduler and assistant to the state director for “high-profile” New Jersey Senator Cory Booker. Carter began his work as a Staff Assistant in Booker’s office, “answering the phones, helping with casework, helping the casework team do their job... a catch-all sort of role” before his recent promotion. Now, Carter is responsible for “mapping out the Senator’s in-state time,” as well as assisting the State Director, the highest-ranking representative position backing the legislator in, “propel[ing] the mission.” However, Carter originally came to Muhlenberg with the dream of being an actor.

A double major in theater and political science, Carter didn’t see himself entering into the political sphere until the COVID-19 pandemic when there was “no theater happening.” He saw the rise of discrimination, and as a result, advocacy for causes such as Black Lives Matter and work against Asian discrimination. “I felt at that time that I had to sort of roll up my sleeves,” he commented, saying that he began to get involved within his community, as an “advocate” for these and other groups. He identified

this work as “something good to be a part of,” and was moved to translate this passion into his work in student government.

After three years as a Student Representative, Carter “[didn’t] like what [he was] seeing.” He commented that it was confusing what was being done by the Association, and that “at that time [it] was a group of students that nobody knew that had a tremendous amount of power and was... not distributing it equally.” They were elected, he said, but not known by the student body. In his junior year, he decided to “shake things up,” becoming more vocal in meetings and standing against the ideology that the representatives and officers are “isolated” from students. “Make it more accessible, spend more money, give more access, more transparency, more visibility,” he added.

It was from this vocality and commitment to change that Carter had people pushing him to run for president. There was a “put money where your mouth is” mentality that friends and administrators expressed to him as the election season approached. After winning the presidential campaign, Carter set up systems that would improve student government for many years to come, which he reflects that he’s “proud of.” He put the most



Zaire Carter ‘22, photographed in 2021 for Muhlenberg’s magazine.

pressing issues at the center of conversations, tackling them head-on, no matter the difficulty or timeliness. Carter was also notably the first Black president of the Student Government Association at Muhlenberg, a title he didn’t seek out, yet handled with care and consideration for all people he represented— as an emerging leader, resident advisor and worker in the Office of Multicultural Life. He remembers entering his first meeting as president and stating “The students are watching us.” Carter moved with that mentality through the year, doing everything he could to support and uplift students, giving them resources and access.

“If you can get something done at an educational institution, you can get things done anywhere,” he remarked. And he truly did mean anywhere, even the United States government. As a lover of the show “West Wing,” Carter approached the government with excitement, hoping to build bridges and commit to the same qualities of leadership and work he previously had, this time at a larger scale. Having known of Booker for a number of years before his undergraduate graduation, Carter jumped at the opportunity to apply for an opening on his team.

“It’s been very, very rewarding, just to see how federal agencies work... and the role of

a congressional office,” he commented. This “public service” work has been fulfilling for Carter, and he sees it as a way to increase transparency by “getting people the resources and the help that they need.”

“The Senator is a very personable down to earth guy who I think genuinely believes in, you know, sort of those... ideals of hope and of democracy and of fighting back against these really dark and divisive forces that are trying to split us all apart. And so it’s been a real treat.”

Looking to the future, Carter says he is loving his work in public service, and wants to continue it. “I like helping people. I like bringing government closer to people, I like pulling back the curtain and showing people what government can do and what it has done.” He also added that this work isn’t easy, but is meaningful, and he hopes to continue working hard, especially through this election year. Carter has never shied away from making impactful change, and he doesn’t think that’s stopping now. “If you want your politics to be better, if you want your public officials to be better, if you want your politician to be better, then you’ve got to start doing it... You’ve got to start living it.”



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Trial and error

Muhlenberg Mock Trial club competed this weekend.

By MATTHEW KLINGER
News Editor

Matthew Klinger is also a member of the Mock Trial Club

For the first time in two years, the Muhlenberg Mock Trial team competed at the regional competition this weekend. The competition was held at Haverford College, and the team competed in four rounds, two on Saturday and two on Sunday. Matthew Klinger '24, Bridget Parks '25, Dylan Meirowitz '26, Joyce Bento '26, Geoffrey Levy '26, Robert Becht '27, Emily Gonzalez '27, Katie Hunt '27, Kabir Burman '27, Amina Dia '27, Laura Walthier '27 and Nora Elkhyati '27 were all part of the team this year. Ross Dardani, Ph.D., of the Political Science Department, is the club's advisor, and he transported students from Muhlenberg to Haverford each day.

In mock trial, the cases alternate—one year is a civil case and the next is a criminal case. This year, it was a criminal case involving a fictional art heist during a charity gala. Half of the team represented the prosecution, meaning that they were arguing for the accused party's culpability. The other half of the

team was part of the defense, meaning that they were arguing for the accused party's innocence.

The team has been working on the case since the fall semester, and the competition was the culmination of months of hard work. Given that the club was restarting after not competing last year, the goal was for this year to be a learning year for the new members to gain experience. Dardani explained that "We agreed that the goals [for this year] were definitely—because of how inexperienced we were—to compete at regionals, gain experience and learn." The hope is that this year's competition will provide the members with valuable experience that they can use as momentum going forward into next year.

While the competition was a lot of fun and a good learning experience, it did not go off without a hitch. When the team first arrived at the competition, they were informed that they had too many people on the roster; the American Mock Trial Association (AMTA) only allows ten students per roster. However, Muhlenberg had twelve. This meant that two people—Klinger and Bento—could not compete,

and two other people—Elkhyati, an attorney, and Levy, a witness—would have to learn their roles in less than an hour. While learning roles in such a short period of time was a tall task, two factors made it more manageable.

First, attorneys are allowed to read off of prepared notes, meaning that Elkhyati did not have to memorize everything. While it meant that she would not have the background knowledge of the character she was talking to on the stand, she would still be able to direct and cross-examine witnesses. Unfortunately for witnesses, they are not allowed to read off of prepared materials. However, Levy was playing one role on Saturday and another on Sunday. Coincidentally, Bento was originally set to play Levy's Sunday role on Saturday. This meant that Levy, while not fully familiar with his new role, would have enough familiarity with the character to answer questions.

However, after the rocky start, the team continued to improve as the competition went on. In fact, they nearly won their final round, falling short by a mere four points. Dardani remarked that "it was a toss-up." Parks spoke positively of the

team's progress, saying, "all of our members were able to work together and establish a solid performance that earned several compliments from judges."

Reflecting on the competition, Dardani stated, "I could not have been prouder about how every member of the team handled themselves, especially in how they persevered through multiple crises each day. I thought that everyone on the team individually did a great job and that people really came together when there were challenges to work through them."

Students were still able to have fun amidst the challenges while also getting experience for future years. Gonzalez, one of the attorneys, commented that "This weekend was such an incredible learning opportunity. As someone who had never done a mock trial before, I was extremely nervous and unaware of what to expect. But nevertheless, it was an exhilarating experience in which I built a bond with my fellow teammates, practiced my skills and was able to network. Competing was such a fun experience and I can't wait to compete again."

Elkhyati, also an attorney, shared that sentiment. "It was a

liberating experience! Being able to practice and perform my passion through mock trial is one of my favorite parts about Muhlenberg," she explained.

The weekend was fun for witnesses too. Walthier said "I had a lot of fun. I was pretty nervous because I am not the best public speaker, but I got more comfortable as the days went on. I had a great time with the team!" Hunt elaborated on that: "It was great being a witness taking the stand. I really felt a rush of energy and excitement," she explained.

Dardani is looking forward to future years for Mock Trial. He explained that "We have right now a really strong core for rosters in the future, and hopefully we can build around the core and the foundation we have built this year. Everyone is super supportive of each other. I'm excited, very excited, for the future of the Mock Trial at Muhlenberg."

Those who are interested in joining Mock Trial for next year should contact Dardani at rossdardani@muhlenberg.edu. Students should also follow @bergmocktrial to stay informed.

The 2024 election so far

By MOLLY LEVINE
Contributing Writer

The presidential election feels like it has been upon us for over a year with television ads, TikToks and podcasts discussing an election that is looking eerily similar to one from four years ago. With about nine months until the election, here's how the current field of candidates is looking:

Joe Biden

The current President of the United States is seeking a second term. According to the 538 Project, Biden currently has a 39.8 percent approval rate. During Biden's term, he has forgiven many Americans of student debt, seen a massive economic bounceback and passed large legislative initiatives including the Infrastructure Bill and the American Rescue Plan. He has received criticism from young voters and Arab-Americans about his support for Israel during the Israel-Hamas War and the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. The most present debate, however, is Biden's age, as he will be the oldest president to ever hold office, ending his hypothetical second term at the age of 86.

Donald Trump

President Trump is running for President for the third time since 2016. He easily won the Republican Iowa Caucus, New Hampshire and South Carolina primaries, as well as the Nevada caucus, though it was controver-

sial. Trump is currently enjoying the perks of being both an incumbent and an outsider, and there is little doubt when looking at his polling numbers and almost universal support among party leaders that he will be the Republican Party nominee once again. However, Trump is currently facing 91 criminal charges for four indictments: undermining the 2016 election by covering up his affair with adult film star Stormy Daniels, taking and resisting returning classified security documents, attempting to overturn the 2020 election on a federal level and attempting to overturn the 2020 election in Fulton County, Georgia. Some of these cases will begin this spring, still leaving the question of how Trump's legal situation will affect his candidacy unanswered.

Nikki Haley

The only other candidate left in the Republican primary is Nikki Haley, a former member of the Trump administration. An Indian-American woman raised in the South, Haley gained notoriety as a Tea Party-backed candidate in her successful campaign for Governor of South Carolina. She came in third in the Iowa Caucus and second in the New Hampshire and South Carolina primaries. Haley is a conservative candidate, but has pivoted her campaign to target moderates and independents. As the race has progressed, she has become increasingly critical of Donald Trump. While statistically it is looking difficult for

Haley to win enough delegates to secure the nomination, she could be waiting in the wings in case Trump is affected by his age or legal status.

Third Party Candidates

Robert F. Kennedy Jr., nephew to President John F. Kennedy and son to Robert F. Kennedy Sr. originally ran in the Democratic primary before withdrawing to run as an independent. Kennedy is known for his extreme anti-vaccine conspiracy theories. Other third-party candidates include two left wing candidates: independent candidate Cornel West, professor of philosophy, and Socialist Party candidate Claudia de la Cruz.

Looking Forward

This election may be the first major election for some students at Muhlenberg to be able to vote. President of BergVotes Kabir Burman '27 had this to offer to students thinking about voting in the upcoming election: "As an international student elected to be President of BergVotes, I often joke that the one student who cannot vote seems to be telling everyone else to do so. [Even so,] being situated in a swing district in a battleground state has a lot of important effects."

"For one, your vote often has more of an outsized impact on national elections when registered to vote from such a district. You also tend to have a closer relationship with politicians and parties vying for your vote. Whether you agree with

the system or not, you will undeniably have a louder voice when voting here."

"However, with this power comes responsibility as well. With our representatives growing older and seemingly more disconnected from what young voters prioritize, it falls on us as the newest members of our democracy to help shape it. With the primaries and a major election this year, BergVotes hopes to make it easier for students to get informed, involved and reg-

istered to vote!"

The Pennsylvania primary election is Apr. 23, 2024. Election day is Nov. 5, 2024. If you have any questions about how to register to vote, go to www.pavoterservices.gov or contact BergVotes for more information.

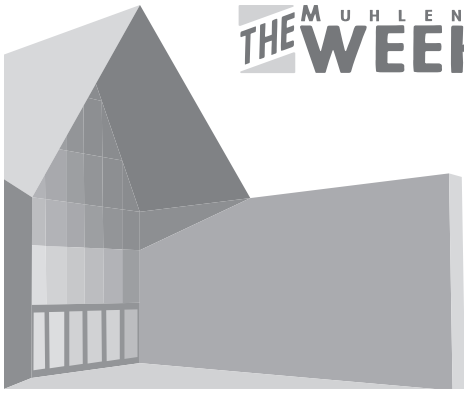
PHOTO COURTESY OF @POTUS ON INSTAGRAM.



PHOTO COURTESY OF @REALDONALDTRUMP ON INSTAGRAM.



Presidential candidates Joe Biden and Donald Trump.



THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY

ARTS & CULTURE

“I did my best and my best is good enough.”

- Hannah Beachler

Artist spotlight: Alex McCauley ‘26

Going behind the camera.

BY KATHERINE CONLON
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

If you’re a Muhlenberg student with Instagram, it’s likely that you’ve seen some of Alex McCauley’s ‘26 artwork pop up on your feed. The economics major’s art Instagram account has been gaining a lot of traction by posting photoshoots with members of the student body. The shoots are not in a traditional style that you might expect from a student photographer. Rather, McCauley’s photos take on an expressive, yet simplistic quality.

His primarily black and white portrait photography has taken the campus community by storm and McCauley is consistently working with new clients. This begs the question—how did McCauley get started on his journey with photography? McCauley noted that in his first semester at Muhlenberg, he decided “it might be nice to have a fourth class that wasn’t super, super involved, that I could kind of relax and have a creative outlet. And that was Intro to Digital Photography.”

Then, in January of 2023, McCauley purchased the digital camera he uses now: a Fuji X-T3. At first, he started bringing the camera around during outings with friends. What McCauley started to notice was that people are more captivated when looking at pictures of other people, rather than any other subject. With this in mind, McCauley began taking photos of others last semester, starting by photographing a party at Delta Tau Delta (DTD.) “Party photography, that was really fun. And that blew up a little more because everybody in DTD shared it and people that were in the pictures shared them and that just kind of exponentially grew the impressions that it got,” said McCauley.

McCauley describes this endeavor in portrait photography as an effort to build trust. “I think this semester, what my project is on, my big project, is I lost trust in somebody last semester and I’m trying to gain back that trust in somebody through strangers asking me to help them look their best. [It] is something that is really valuable to me that they trust me.”

When discussing the dynamic that he likes to create between himself and the subject, McCauley stressed the importance of collaboration, saying, “But I don’t like having full autonomy.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEX MCCAULEY ‘26



Alex McCauley ‘26 photographs Elianna Dean ‘26.

It’s really a lot of pressure and it feels unfair. I want it to feel like a collaboration between me and that subject. And when it’s just my ideas that are coming across, it doesn’t have the same value to me as a collaboration.”

McCauley, who is also a member of Muhlenberg’s golf team, is particularly inspired by acclaimed sports photographers Kohjiro Kinno and Christian Hafer. “They’re very, very good at a style which I think is the hardest thing for me in photography because almost everybody has access to the same types of materials and the same types of subjects,” said McCauley.

Connecting McCauley’s passions for golf and photography might not be as difficult as one might imagine. McCauley connected the two, saying, “Golf is a lot about creating different shots based on the parameters and re-

strictions, ‘you can’t go too far over on this side,’ or ‘it’s really bad if you miss in this spot.’ I think I like focusing, in photography, on creating that shot.”

McCauley takes an approach of neutrality when photographing his subjects. When photographing for a shoot, he is solely focused on the craft. He stated, “I’m not really focused on who they (the subjects) are, or what opinions they might have on me or that I might have on them. I’m just trying to create the best possible experience/photos with them.”

To schedule your shoot with McCauley or to just check out his work, head to @amccauleyart on Instagram.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEX MCCAULEY ‘26



Alex McCauley ‘26 photographs Lindsay Sherrick ‘25.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEX MCCAULEY ‘26



A self-portrait by student photographer Alex McCauley ‘26.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEX MCCAULEY ‘26



Alex McCauley ‘26 photographs Sully Grace ‘24.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEX MCCAULEY ‘26



Alex McCauley ‘26 photographs Charlotte Alexander ‘25.

“The Haunting of Hartfield Hall” based on Muhlenberg ghost story

Lottie Segal’s ‘23 ghost story about coming to terms with a transgender identity.

By SHAIYAN FEISAL
ARTS AND CULTURE EDITOR

‘Berg New Works is an inaugural opportunity for Muhlenberg College sophomores, juniors, seniors and alumni who graduated in 2022 or 2023 to collaborate with faculty mentors, a cast, crew and designers to bring their scripts to life in workshop productions as part of the theatre departmental season in spring ‘24. The committee ended up picking two pieces, “The Haunting of Hartfield Hall” written by Lottie Segal ‘23 and directed by Muhlenberg’s Director of Theatre Jim VanValen, and “-in-chief” written by Ally Duvak ‘22 and directed by Visiting Assistant Professor of Theatre Jessie Dean.

Segal explained the synopsis of their play stating that “‘Haunting’ is about a student at Claremont Academy getting haunted by a ghost in the girls’ dorm and realizing he is transgender. Just as much as it is about the difficulties of high school, like making new friends and getting to class on time, it is also about how much harder life is made for trans people and how the system is designed to exclude us.

The play was actually inspired by Muhlenberg College’s campus. Segal detailed, “This play was inspired by Brown Hall. I

had heard stories of the ghost, Ingrid, and how she was upset by boys staying the night when the dorm was an all-girls dorm. I was living in Brown and thinking about my gender and this ghost and the story of the play grew from that.”

In regards to what the audience should take away from watching this play, Segal said, “I hope that audiences gain insight into what it is like to be a young trans person, when it feels like the whole world is against you. But I also hope, along with that, they see the immense beauty and joy that comes from being young and trans. Most of all, I want audiences to feel hopeful about the future and to see that there is a path forward where harmful systems can be dismantled.”

VanValen expressed similar sentiments mentioning that “The play is a ghost story, it’s a coming-of-age story, it’s an empowerment story and it’s a story that, in its own way, challenges certain ideas on tradition, structure and systems. I hope audiences leave the theatre thinking about these things -- while also feeling a bit more happy and a bit more hopeful about the future.”

Directors can have different ideologies about how they want to manage the cast and the ensemble. VanValen said, “I always

try my best to encourage our rehearsal space and process to be a place of compassion and discovery. The play explores important topics -- and I think it does it through a lens of courage, connection and celebration. These are qualities that I have been seeing throughout our ensemble and production team over these many weeks, and I think we are all working together to share a wonderful story for all audiences to embrace.”

Alec Gould ‘26, who identifies as a transgender man, plays Lee. Concerning his role, they said, “I’ve loved rehearsing as Lee! It’s been such an interesting experience from reading the script and seeing some of the experiences that I thought only I had or things that only I had thought about down on paper. Makes a guy feel a little less alone sometimes.”

With respect to whether Lee’s experiences will help audience members come to terms with their identities, Gould stated, “I absolutely think that Lee’s character will help audience members who are a part of the LGBTQIA+ community to come to terms with themselves and realize that it’s ok to be who you are. And it’s my hope that people who are less supportive of the community will see the show and come to a better understanding about the LGBTQIA+ community and maybe begin to shift their views.”

standing about the LGBTQIA+ community and maybe begin to shift their views.”

Macy Sauder ‘27, who plays Rowan in the play, stated, “I think that my favorite part of the rehearsal experience has been really diving into the characterization of my character. I would say that Rowan helps Lee feel comfortable enough in his identity journey to come out to his other classmates and teachers, making her a strong and supportive ally.”

Griffin Nielsen ‘27 who plays West, reflects on their journey playing this character. “I am playing West, and this journey has been incredible. Working with Jim VanValen on focusing and finding this character has been unlike anything I’ve ever acted.”

Carolina Escobar Rosales ‘27 plays Alice, who is more of an enemy to Lee. She states, “Alice is a complicated character to enjoy per say, she’s got an entitled and demanding personality that we see during the play as she voices her dislike for Lee and the ‘problems’ he brings to the table. However, these characteristics seem to come out due to inner turmoil she has about herself. To me, it seems like she is only insecure because Lee is so sure about himself.

But I, of course, enjoyed being

a part of the process and being able to perform a character that isn’t the usual happy and positive characters seen on stage but reflects a real and essential experience trans people face. So, I’m happy to be a part of the process and bring awareness to transness/queerness as a result.”

Escobar Rosales continued “I’m definitely one of the big adversaries that Lee faces in the play and while [my character] doesn’t support him in accepting his identity, I think my berating nature helps him realize that all the pushback and reluctance that he receives from the people around him is just a sign that he’s doing something that’s important and that’s worth fighting for,”

“My character symbolizes the widely accepted ideas in society about gender norms and because it’s not something that can be easily altered, Lee learns to find a way around it instead of constantly exerting his energy and in that, I think he finally learns to embrace his identity and love himself,” she continued. You can see “The Haunting of Hartfield Hall” from Feb. 29 - Mar. 3. Tickets are available online at muhlenberg.edu/seeashow.

A celebration through fashion

BSA hosts its annual fashion show to top off Black History Month events

By SHINAM HUSSAIN
ARTS AND CULTURE EDITOR

To celebrate Black History Month, Muhlenberg’s Black Students Association (BSA) hosted their annual fashion show on Feb. 23. The show is held to signify a celebration of cultural diversity through fashion. There were multiple categories for the fashion show including, “Rep your culture,” “Standin on business,” “Just you” and “Mr. Put it on.” These different categories provided multiple outlets for different fashion styles to be celebrated. “Rep your culture” was a category created for students to wear and showcase clothing and fashion that was expressive of the student’s cultural identity. “Just you” provided an op-



PHOTO BY SIERRA ADDY ‘27

Student models take part in Black Students Association’s Annual Fashion Show on Feb. 23.

Welcome to the 'Berg New Works newsroom

Ally Duvak '22 brings a 2016 college newsroom to the stage with “-in-chief”

BY JOHN VEGLIA
MANAGING EDITOR

“Contradictory, challenging and multi-faceted” are the words of playwright Ally Duvak '22 when describing “-in-chief.” The original work is one of the two new plays featured in the 'Berg New Works festival with the theatre & dance department. “It’s not all one thing. It’s comedic...,” continued Duvak. “And [people] find out what happens and think it’s this dark and serious thing and it covers serious topics, but I think the best art can do both.”

“-in-chief” is actually Duvak’s second original piece to be performed in the Studio Theatre after her play “Wake,” which premiered as a Muhlenberg Theatre Association (MTA) Studio in spring 2022. Olivia Thiemann '24, who plays MNG, commented, “The cast, crew and director are all the most loving, fun and supportive people to work with. I am honored to have worked on an Ally Duvak original both as my first show at Muhlenberg (“Wake” 2022) and now my last show at Muhlenberg (“-in-chief” 2024).”

“-in-chief” takes place in a college newspaper room run by students during the 2016 presidential election. Duvak has had her own experience with a college newsroom after being involved with The Weekly during her time at Muhlenberg.

“I think when I was in that space, I always knew there was like a story there. I don’t know that I necessarily knew it was this one. But it’s such a dynamic space, there are quite literally stories happening live in that room, as well as the overarching story of the room,” Duvak stated.

The dynamics of the newsroom extend to the themes of power in the play. “It’s the inherent power structures of when you have people reporting to other people,” mentioned Duvak. The element of power is seen in various dynamics thanks to the 2016 setting and the hierarchies in place. The idea of power is represented “both on a national scale and a micro scale when it comes to the newsroom. And I think I wouldn’t have been able to tap into that if I hadn’t seen it with my own two eyes.”

The idea of power in the rehearsal room was more of a communal experience where actors and other collaborators could share feedback on the script and allow for it to develop and grow. “[Duvak] is such a wonderful collaborative spirit that we were able to structure our beginning rehearsals as exploratory-using improv techniques and games to

lead to a deeper understanding of character and given circumstance,” stated Director Jessie Dean, visiting assistant professor of directing, acting process and Shakespeare.

“The characters that exist in the play now are much richer because of the ideas and work that our actors brought to our initial rehearsal weeks,” continued Dean. “I think that’s what makes this type of work so exciting - all of us must be in an active state of collaboration together in the room, we must all trust each other and the work. Ultimately, [Duvak] writes the play that is in her head and we are all there to support her process.”

Isabelle Peters '24, who plays EIC, commented on how the characters and the text have grown. Peters stated, “I am so happy with the level of detail and development all of the characters in the show have gone through, and I couldn’t be more proud of the whole cast and production team. I also want to give a huge shoutout to Ally Duvak, a Muhlenberg alum, who has worked closely with us throughout the process. It has been so much fun bringing her vision to life.”

Dean described the joy of developing a new work when having a trustworthy connection with the playwright during the process. It’s “very different from the way that we approach a published script and the innate trust that it takes a playwright to enter a development process with a director is both thrilling and ter-

rifying,” stated Dean. “My hope as a director is that I do no harm to the existing script but instead shine a light onto the path of the work so that the playwright, actors, dramaturgs and I can explore our surroundings with care and consideration.”

Anna Item '25, the associate director, intimacy captain and a Voices of Strength (VOS) peer educator, highlighted the importance of collaboration and trust during this experience. “It’s an absolute privilege and joy to watch [Dean] work and observe her unique, holistic, caring process for theatre-making. I have learned so much from her about holding space, encouraging actors to play and make discoveries, and how to balance fun with efficiency,” stated Item.

Item also shared how Duvak has been “excellent at ‘killing her darlings.’” This phrase refers to when a writer may have to cut an element of the piece that they love because it is not working for the overall story.

Resources for audience members will be available before and after the show thanks to VOS. ““-in-chief” contains some intense discussions of sexual assault, and I’m so grateful to my fellow VOS members who are tabling during and after the performance to support audience members. We will also have space reserved for audience members to speak privately or debrief as a group,” stated Item.

“I hope audiences come away from this production with active questions and begin to have

deeper conversations in the community about the ways in which we support women, victims and survivors and each of their narratives. We can’t hide these stories and pretend they don’t exist,” shared Dean.

“-in-chief” opens tonight, Feb. 29, as part of the 'Berg New Works festival in the Studio Theatre. Tickets also include the original work “The Haunting of Hartfield Hall” and the festival runs until Mar. 3.

The cast of “-in-chief” rehearses.

Duvak concluded, “I think the end of the show begs the question of what will you do? I think we’ve raised a story that is so unfortunately familiar. And we have sort of the case studies displayed of how many times we’ve heard a story like this. The play said that enough is enough, what are we going to do to take action?”



PHOTO BY ALLY DUVAK '22.



Have SGA votes been swayed too easily?

By LEILA FARZIN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

I attended my first Student Government Association (SGA) General Assembly meeting last fall- just looking to complete a class assignment- not thinking anything particularly interesting would happen. However, I left with my interest piqued and many questions regarding a controversial vote that had apparently occurred at the previous meeting. I later learned that the divisive vote being discussed was the club approval of Chabad, where out of 22 votes, nine were abstentions. At the meeting I attended on October 4, during an open conversation about the abstention policy and when it is appropriate to utilize, many SGA members expressed feelings of pressure from students who had filled the room in support of Chabad’s approval. They were essentially alluding to the idea that the vote may have turned out differently if not for this outside pressure.

In suggesting that the vote may have been swayed based on students in attendance at the meeting, questions have been raised about what SGA members see as their responsibility to the student body. Members of a representative student government should be able to firmly make occasionally tough decisions by thinking through the lens of

what is best for the student body as a whole. This is a responsibility they commit to when becoming an SGA representative, but is seemingly, at times, not something that has been carried out to its best ability .

After each member submits their vote on their computer, they also verbally relay it for everyone to hear. Their votes are further recorded in an open database. In this sense, once elected, SGA members commit to broadcasting their decisions. In another SGA vote for the club approval of the Middle Eastern Student Association (MESA), members of the club noted that they felt bombarded by questions at the meeting, mostly by attending students who did not seem to understand their mission as a club. The vote for MESA’s approval was postponed with the intention to resolve some overall confusion amongst SGA members. Knowing of the events from the Chabad vote, it’s hard not to wonder if this would have also turned out differently without the bombardment of questions from other students. Was it more so postponed because of pressure felt from these students, similar to the pressure in regards to the Chabad vote?

This is not to say that members of the SGA should not take into consideration the thoughts of the students attending the meetings. Students being able

to attend SGA meetings and share their viewpoints is an extremely important and valuable part of the student government. Even still, SGA members should realize that students attending meetings are often only a very small portion of the student body. Students are more likely to come to a General Assembly meeting if they already have strong opinions on one of the topics at hand. Though it may be understandably challenging at times for SGA members to make firm decisions that may differ from the opinions of these stu-

dents attending the meetings, in being unable to do so, the government may not be able to fulfill its intended purpose.

There’s always going to be possible criticism from people who don’t agree on what is ultimately decided by the SGA. There are nuances and complexities to some issues and it is practically impossible to make everyone happy. That is why a student government should consist of a widely diverse group of students with a variety of perspectives that can be representative of and support the whole

student body. If members of the SGA are unable to stick to their stances because of pressure to appease a small group of students attending meetings, then the representative government is not serving its purpose. The SGA seems to have been prone at times to this pitfall in their duty to make decisions for the benefit of the student body and should make sure this semester that their commitment to this responsibility is clear.



MUHLENBERG THEATRE & DANCE

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR:
GABRIEL JASON DEAN

FEB 29 - MAR 3, 2024

-IN-CHIEF

by Ally Duvak '22
directed by Jessie Dean

The editor of a college newspaper struggles to protect the status quo as the 2016 presidential election looms.

THE HAUNTING OF HARTFIELD HALL

by Lottie Segal '23
directed by Jim VanValen

Gender norms and a persistent ghost push Lee to come to terms with his transgender identity. For Young Audiences.

MUHLENBERG.EDU/SEEASHOW

The Train windows are Black:

By RYAN STEREMBERG
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

PHOTO COURTESY OF PEXELS.



The train windows are black.
Other than a few passing lamplights,
The only thing that can be seen is the reflection in the window.
The train slows and stops at a station,
Alongside an identical but entirely empty train.
Full of dim light or full of ghosts, we move on.
The other train doesn't mind, it has its own perception of time,
The train and conductor try to throw me from my seat when we change lines.
Bumping and swerving, it makes it hard to write.
I wish the best for those aboard who are trying to sketch.

When you look out into the pitch black,
The only thing you can see is yourself,
It is terrifying for some, and quite soothing for others.
When you move, the you in window moves. When you raise your arm your arm
in the window does the same. Some people love the sense of control. Others
hate it.

FROM **FASHION PAGE 6**
portunity for students to display and celebrate their own personal style. Along with these two categories that were surrounded around embracing personal identity and style, there were more strictly fashion-oriented categories, in "Standin on business," which was adorning business attire, and "Mr. Put it on." Quynh Do '25 said her favorite part of the show was the "Standin on business category" because "for a category that is so specific, the variety I saw was surprising. Some were dressed more serious and true to the business style but there were also those who were more casual. I thought this category was really unique, and for me, the most fun to watch." The fashion show provided food and drinks as well, along with the opportunity to have your own photo and video taken, making the event an all-around entertaining experience.

The fashion show was open to all students of color for participation, in any category they chose. "Rep your culture" and "Just you" were both categories that allowed for more personal fashion expression in the show. Both categories had various students who were able to walk in attire that felt authentic to them, and they were met with animated cheers and claps from audience members. The show buzzed with excitement, where

people had their phones out to record certain styles and to cheer on their friends and peers. Anna Hanley '25 said her favorite category was "Rep your culture" because "the crowd energy was the highest and just so supportive and uplifting of the models and the clothes they were wearing. It's cool to be shown even a glimpse into someone's background or identity and fashion is a great way to go about that."

Ibrahim Sidibeh '25, vice president for BSA spoke to the importance of hosting a fashion show in celebration for Black History Month saying, "The fashion show is a testament and expression of joy and beauty among the students of color at Muhlenberg. It provides a platform of self-expression, cultural celebration and empowerment for students of color."

Hosting a fashion show to celebrate Black History Month is to celebrate not only how Black students and other students of color express themselves through fashion, but to also celebrate all the excellence the Black community has contributed to the fashion industry. The Black community has made a lasting impact on the fashion industry and many of the fashion trends we know of and subscribe to today, all the way from streetwear to what is considered high fashion. The role of the Black community in the fashion industry has been integral in forming the

fashion we have become familiar with today. Shobha Pai '24 stated, "I hope we see more collaborations with BSA in the future with other affinity groups, such as African Students Organization (ASO), Comunidad and Students Of Caribbean Ancestry (SOCA), that highlight and celebrate Black culture."

Looking at streetwear, its origins are traced back to the Black urban neighborhoods in the 1980s, and now that very style is seen worn and adapted globally. Fashion has been known as a way to connect people from all different backgrounds, and to embrace difference and diversity through creative expression. The fashion show held up to these standards, providing students of color a space to celebrate their identities through styles they felt comfortable and empowered in, surrounded by peers there to cheer them on and uplift them, providing for a celebratory end to the month.

"The reason why it is a closing event is because we wanted to end off the month with an expression of strength and joy, a goal that we share as a BSA to spread across campus." Sidibeh continued.

"I thought it was absolutely awesome," said Alec Artis '26, who walked in the show. "I've walked a runway before, but the audience, having people there, that's what really made it fun... an amazing memory."



Aquarius
DO NOT EAT THAT.

Pisces
Happy birthday! Hope you're not holding out hope for your ex to "hbd" text their way back into your life!

Aries
March will be your time. Time to possibly laugh, to possibly cry, but definitely time to listen to "Domino" by Jessie J.

Taurus
Your parents will adopt a little mouse boy... Stuart Little who?

Gemini
Don't listen to them, your mom jokes ARE still funny.

Cancer
I know that weighted dinosaur from target is giving you baby fever. PUT THAT THING DOWN.

Leo
You will have to have some tough conversations this week, and that's okay. Fill the awkward silence with Lil John ad-libs. You'll be sure to get through to them.

Virgo
It's time to talk. I know you weren't allowed to watch Spongebob as a kid... KEEP IT TO YOURSELF.

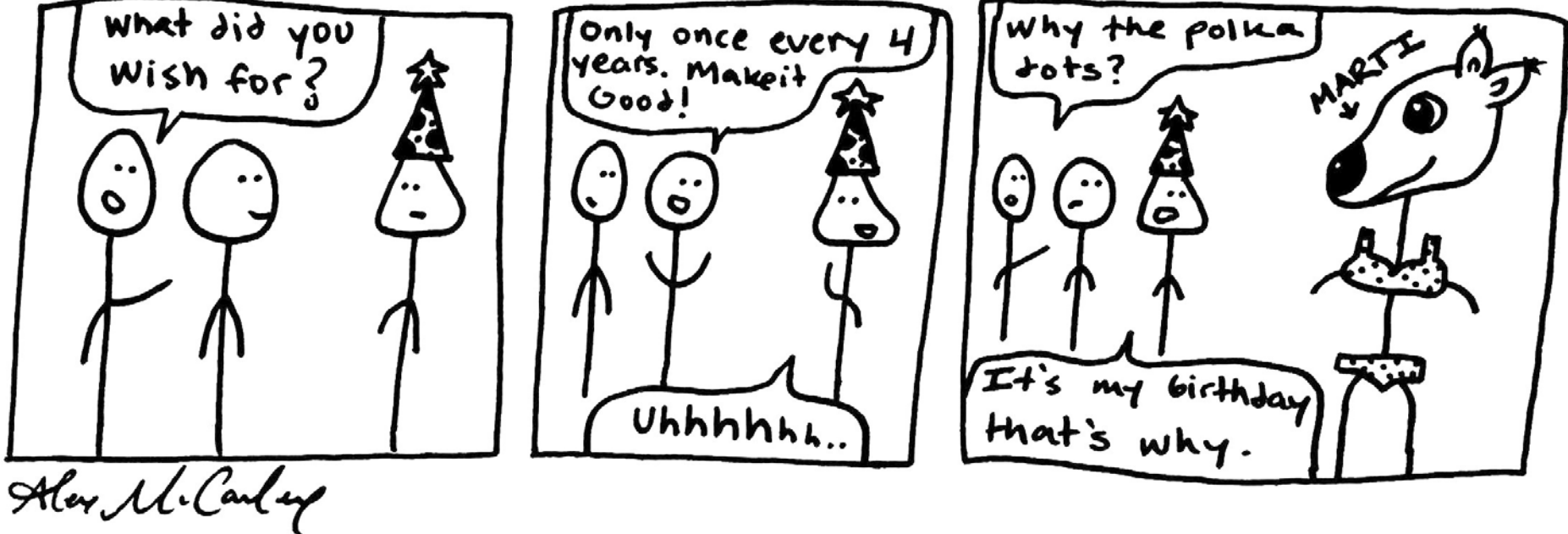
Libra
Stop reapplying your EOS egg chapstick. Living in the past will not inform your future.

Scorpio
You will get to drink around the world at EPCOT soon, TRUST.

Sagittarius
EAT THAT.

Capricorn
Don't check Yik Yak, babe. You will walk away in tears. The herd will be ruthless.

@amccauley art



Back in the swing of things

PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY '27



Harrison Neff '27 demonstrates his skills.

By NOAH BERGER
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

After their match against Johns Hopkins was postponed last weekend, the Muhlenberg men's tennis team had their first match of the spring season this past weekend against the nationally-ranked Swarthmore College. While it was the start of the season for the Mules, it was also a season of new beginnings for the team, as they recently welcomed Doug Maynard as their new head coach. Captain Gabe Tamarkin '26 touched upon what it means to begin a season with Coach Maynard at the helm. Tamarkin said, "Coach Maynard from the second he got here has instilled a strong work ethic in the team. The team is learning so much from him and [his] presence is making us better every day." From the perspective of Tamarkin, we can see that the Mules are well-positioned for success as they are learning every day from Maynard.

Josh Benson '24 touched upon what it means to be one of the captains for the team and how the team maintains chemistry. He said, "Player-to-player relationships are key and something that, with such a large freshman class, is essential. We've had team meals and other similar bonding events that most people attended to foster connections within the team. A focus on open communication is also important so we can nip conflict in the bud. It has been nice to get a better connection within the team and that couldn't happen with-

out everyone buying in. Coach Maynard has been great at facilitating accountability within our program, and in his short time here is already putting an emphasis on playing for the team in what can often be seen as an individual performance."

Josh Simon '27 also reflected on the atmosphere under Maynard. He said, "Coach Maynard is great. He is what this team needs. It's been interesting to get to know his coaching style but he gives structure to a team [that] needs it. He knows what this team needs and he seems excited to get things done."

While the match against Swarthmore resulted in a loss, the Mules are excited about how they performed for the first time on the court in months. Tamarkin said, "I think the effort we put in against a nationally ranked opponent in Swarthmore was incredible. I was looking forward to us being competitive, and we were able to compete for sure." The Mules are ready to contend throughout the rest of their season as they continue to face fierce Centennial Conference (CC) competition.

Benson reflected on the first match, "After our first loss this season, it's important to bounce back and not let this loss impact us too much and get into our heads. Battling in matches is something we're hoping to improve. Some of the guys had great battles, but we want to have a more consistent approach to battling every point, even if we're down. We also should focus more on not overcompli-

cating things. We played a good team, but they looked even better when we tried to do more than we needed to and wound up giving them free points."

Simon touched on some of the initiatives the team needs to work on after the first spring match. He said, "Something that needs a little work that our coach pointed out to us is the atmosphere. He told us we never want to be in a situation where the other team is louder than us in our home facility. We need to keep the energy as high as we can throughout the entire match."

Tamarkin elaborated on what it means to be a captain of the tennis team, "As captain, I have made sure to emphasize that we are in a period of adjustment with a new coach, and we need to keep working to be routine in our practices and matches. Our player-to-player relationships are so vital to the team, especially since the majority, if not all of our starting lineup, are first-year students. I think the arrival of Coach Maynard has only strengthened our chemistry and we will continue to bond as a young up-and-coming team looking to make our presence known within the Centennial Conference."

PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY '27



Harrison Neff '27 prepares to play.

A last-minute win

By PENELOPE SCHNEIDER
STAFF WRITER

The Muhlenberg men’s lacrosse team played an unforgettable game at their home field against Clarkson University, and they managed to secure an impressive 8-7 victory in their season opener. The Mules’ win against the Golden Knights, who boasted an impressive 11-5 record in the previous season, was a significant moment for the team and marked their potential for success in the current campaign.

As a captain, Matthew Regan’s ‘24 inspiring words reflect the determination and confidence of the team. “Our goal for this season is plain and simple; to win the Centennial Championship. We have the talent, the skills and the right mindset to achieve it, and we are excited to see where this season takes us,” he said. This team has continuously proved themselves and their capabilities, and they are now ready to take the next step towards their goal. It’s time to get their heads in the game and show everyone what they are capable of achieving.

The Mule’s first game of the season proved to be exciting, as it was full of action and high energy. Standout Jack Bill ‘27, emerged as the hero of the game. Bill showed remarkable composure and skill as he scored all five of his goals in the final 30 minutes of play. His decisive goal



PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY

with just 18 seconds remaining in regulation sealed the victory for Muhlenberg, capping off an outstanding comeback from a halftime deficit of 3-1.

In his debut, Bill exuded confidence and excitement as he spoke about the upcoming season. “I’m thrilled to build on the momentum from our win against Clarkson and to continue learning and improving each week,”

he says. As a newcomer to the program, Bill’s positive attitude and commitment to consistent, energetic practices are sure to inspire his teammates and set a high standard for incoming athletes. His mindset is a perfect reflection of Reagan’s vision for the team.

During the game, Bill’s outstanding performance was well supported by the strategic and

leadership skills of captain Wyatt Malia ‘24 and Griffin Minuto ‘25. They both played pivotal roles in securing the win for their team. Minuto’s exceptional dominance in the faceoff position was particularly impressive, as he won crucial possessions that helped the Mules maintain momentum and control in critical moments of the game. Overall, the collective effort and teamwork of the

Mules proved to be the key to their success.

Muhlenberg’s defense is also to praise regarding the win. Brendan Lavarra ‘25 and Luke Schwartzberg ‘25 led the charge, using their skills and coordination to disrupt Clarkson’s offensive rhythm and force turnovers. Despite facing an offense that boasted an average of nearly 12 goals per game in the previous season, the Mules’ defense remained rock solid, limiting Clarkson’s scoring opportunities and demonstrating their ability to bounce back under pressure.

Captain Stephen Krug ‘24 delivered a great performance in goal, making 11 saves, including several crucial stops in the second half. Krug’s goalkeeping was instrumental in preventing Clarkson’s offensive threats and preserving Muhlenberg’s narrow lead in the closing minutes of the game.

The victory against Clarkson not only marks a memorable start to the season for Muhlenberg but also serves as a statement of intent for the team. Defeating a strong opponent like Clarkson, with their high track record from the previous season, underscores Muhlenberg’s potential to compete at a high level and make a significant impact in the lacrosse landscape this year.

Jack Bill ‘27 hits the field.

Women’s lacrosse beats Moravian

By LEXI SIPOS
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

The Muhlenberg women’s lacrosse team started their 2024 season this past Wednesday, Feb. 21. They played a rivalry game against Moravian University, securing a 16-6 win. While the score put the Mules on top, there are many other elements worthy of recognition.

One of the team’s goals outlined before their season was to have a clear strategy. Captain Lily Seifert ‘24 commented, “Our goals for this season as a team is definitely to progress as a team, win a lot of games and continue to maintain our energy and positive attitudes! We put a lot of work in, on and off the field, in the weight room, getting extra reps outside of practice and holding each other accountable. It’s also important for our team that we spend time together outside of practice to ensure good team chemistry.” This plan was evident when the Mules took the field, scoring 16 goals in their first game.

The team’s prioritization of creating chemistry and comradery has made the biggest difference in their experience. Elisabeth Loiselle ‘24 added, “We push each other every day in practice and have all been holding ourselves accountable off the field. Whether that’s getting in



PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY

Women’s lacrosse faces Moravian on Feb. 21.

extra reps, pushing a little harder in the weight room or making sure rest and recovery is a priority, we are all just trying to support each other.”

At the Moravian game, two standout senior players had amazing achievements. Captain Lily Seifert ‘24 scored 100 points, and Captain Nicole Steiner ‘24 scored 100 goals. When Steiner was asked about her milestone, her mindset remained very team-focused. “I am excited and proud to have scored my 100th goal in our

first game. But lacrosse, probably more than most sports, is a team game. A large number of my goals come from assists from my teammates (like my 100th). I am excited about our team’s success going forward.” Her selfless and team-driven attitude speaks to the team’s culture.

Similarly, Seifert has the same philosophy and recognizes the hard work of every individual. “We had a pretty intense and well-rounded off-season where we collectively worked hard on our fitness and stick skills. For

me, I made sure to maintain that coming into the season as well as taking care of my mind and body in order to be able to be fully present and working hard even when things get overwhelming during our season.” The team’s success does not lie with one individual but is exemplary through their collective effort.

Finally, the seniors commented on how they assisted in their first years’ transition. Seifert added, “It’s been really great integrating this freshman class. There are a lot of them, so we

needed to take the time to make them all feel comfortable. Like I said, we make sure to do things outside of practice to allow our team to connect on a deeper level.”

Ultimately, the players are working hard not just on the field but off it, too. They are creating a team identity that surrounds inclusivity, positivity and hard work. Loiselle perfectly described the team atmosphere, “Our team has such a strong camaraderie. I think that’s something that makes our team truly unique, and it’s a dynamic I’m so grateful to be a part of. That drive and motivation that accumulated over the fall has definitely come through in the pre-season and going into our first couple of days. I am excited to see how we continue to expand upon that dynamic.”

If you want to see the Mule’s next matchup, they will compete on Feb. 28, at 4 p.m. on Varsity Field against Misericordia University.

THE MUHLENBERG

WEEKLY / SPORTS

Track and field’s weekend full of records

PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID SINCLAIR PHOTOGRAPH



Joshua Castro ‘25 hands off the baton.

By CAITLIN KINNEAR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

This past weekend, the Muhlenberg track & field program went to the Centennial Conference (CC) championship ready to compete. After traveling to Franklin and Marshall College (F&M) in Lancaster, Pa., the team had an extremely competitive and successful weekend full of achieving medals, personal records, school records and Muhlenberg’s all-time top-ten performances. The men’s team had an impressive final placement of fourth in the CC, only behind three extremely dominant teams. The men placed the highest they have in the past five years. Meanwhile, the women’s team finished eighth in the CC, tying their place from last year.

Even in a conference with extremely fierce competition, Muhlenberg had abundant top finishes. First-place performances consisted of Avery McNulty ‘26 in the high jump and Dylan

DeMagistris ‘24 in the 35lb weight throw. Additionally, Mike Powel ‘26 and Jaden Snow ‘27 both earned second place in their events, Powel in the 35lb weight throw and Snow in the heptathlon. The remaining medalists for Muhlenberg include the third place finishes, which are Maya Richwine ‘27 in the women’s 60m hurdles, Sam McDonough ‘24 in the men’s 60m hurdles, Isaac Schaffer-Neitz ‘27, Joshua Castro ‘25, Bryce Rhodeman ‘27 and Chris Short ‘27 in the men’s 4x200, and of Castro, David Seel ‘27, Raam Ravishankar ‘27 and Short in the 4x400.

The Championship meet also showcased three tied or broken school records, coming from McDonough, who broke the school record he previously owned in the 60m hurdles, McNulty, who tied the school record in the high jump and Snow, who broke the school record in the heptathlon. To add to the noteworthy results, seven Muhlenberg athletes qualified for the regional cham-

pionship. These athletes are McDonough in the 60m hurdles, Max Broadbent ‘27 in the triple jump, DeMagistris and Powel in the weight throw, Richwine in the 60m hurdles, McNulty in the high jump and Shira Gamson ‘26 and Shanice Williams ‘26 in the triple jump. The team additionally put up an incredible 19 Muhlenberg all-time top ten performances.

Given the plenty of successful marks that the team brought, competitor on the men’s team Matt Hajel ‘26 reflected on the competition, “The championship meet at F&M this weekend went extremely well. Everyone had really exciting performances to watch and the whole team was super supportive of one another and we all cheered one another on,” Hajel said. This support and positive energy went a long way and shined through this past weekend along with all the hard work that the Mules have been putting in all season to get to this point.

The efforts made in practice and meets throughout the last few months as well as the results of the Conference meet have been especially remarkable given having such a young team. Hajel added, “The freshman class are huge contributors to our team this year which is definitely something that’s exciting because they can continue to dominate the competition for the next couple of years.” The team’s first-years have started off their college careers boldly and have set an extremely solid foundation to work off of for the next three years.

Now that the team has proved themselves to be exceptionally competitive, there is so much to come for Muhlenberg track as the team awaits the outdoor track season. Hajel discusses the team’s ambitions moving forward, “our team’s goals for outdoor track are to stay strong and go out with a bang. Since we are hosting the conference meet at our home track, we have a home

court advantage. Coach Hackett, our head coach, is retiring after this season so we are confident that we will give it our all to give him the satisfaction of coaching at Muhlenberg for 25 years. With the support of everyone on our team, we can accomplish so much this outdoor season!”

Pressing on with this positive attitude, some of the Mules will advance to the All-Atlantic Region Championships in Rochester, NY hosted by Nazareth College this coming weekend. Shortly after, the whole team will be back and ready to keep fighting as they go to their outdoor season opener at Lafayette College in Easton, Pa. Muhlenberg track is not done yet, there is more of the team’s success to come!

Coming up this week in

SPORTS

Feb 29 - March 6

Women’s Tennis

MUHLENBERG vs HAVERFORD

Sat, March 2 @ 11:00 a.m.
Deitrich Field House

Women’s Lacrosse

MUHLENBERG vs DREW

Sat, March 2 @ 12:00 p.m.
Varsity Field

Men’s Lacrosse

MUHLENBERG vs RENSSELAER

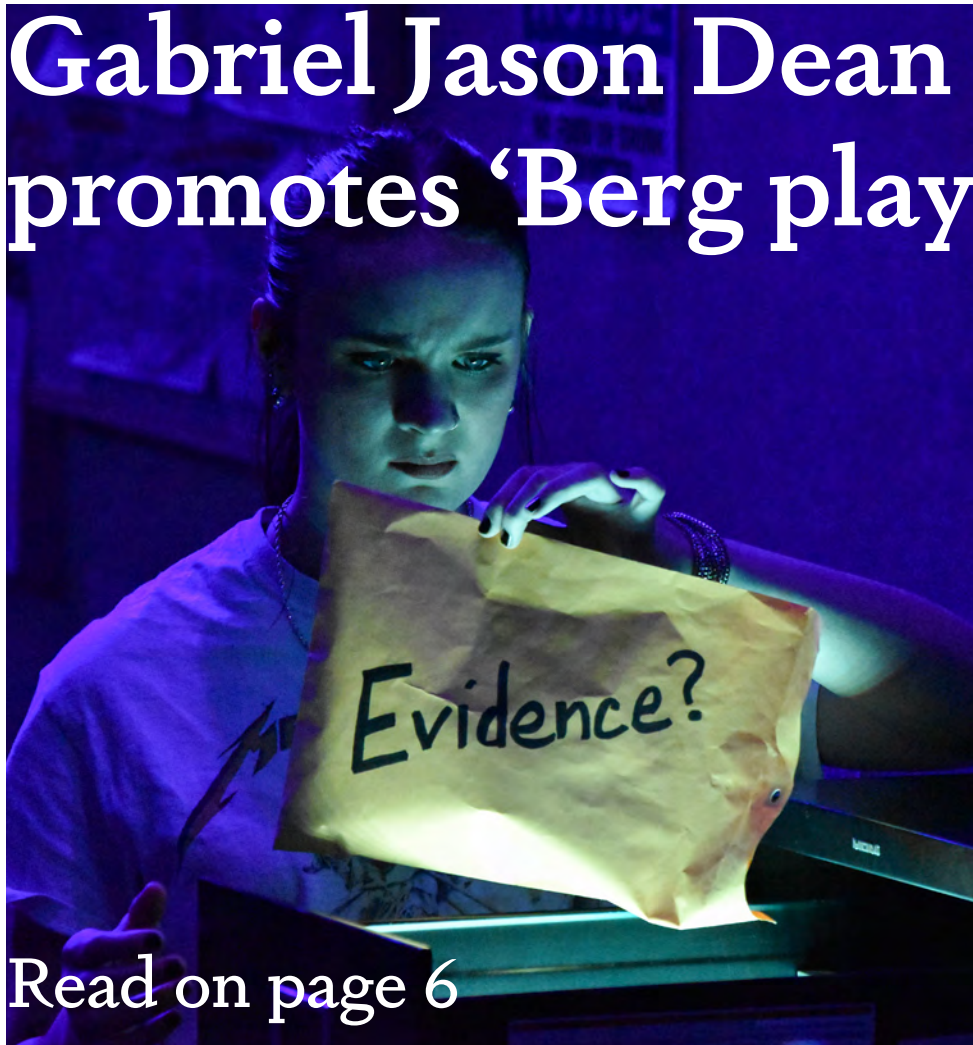
Sat, March 2 @ 1:00 p.m.
Scotty Wood Stadium

Baseball

MUHLENBERG vs RUTGERS

Mon, March 4 @ 3:30 p.m.
Camden Cedarcreek Field

Gabriel Jason Dean promotes 'Berg playwrights



Read on page 6

'Berg New Works premieres, spotlighting alumni playwrights.

Village wall vandalized

PHOTO BY ALEX MCCAULEY '26

By KATHERINE CONLON AND SARAH WEDEKING
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF AND MANAGING EDITOR

On Sunday, Mar. 3, a stone wall outside of the Village apartments was spray-painted with the words “Free Palestine.” On the following day, Associate Dean of Students Courtney Stephens sent a mass email to the student body as a reminder about policies within the Student Code of Conduct. She wrote, “This email is to remind all students that vandalism is a violation of our Student Code of Conduct and can result in sanctions ranging from probation to expulsion, depending on the situation. I urge all students to review the code and make sure that you are aligning your behavior with it at all times.” She continued, noting that if anyone had any information regarding the perpetrators, to contact Campus Safety.

On Campus Safety’s written report, they classified the incident as a “hate crime.” In speaking with Dean of Students Allison Williams, she clarified that this initial classification was due to the spray-painting being reported as a bias incident. However, once the incident was investigated it was determined

not to be biased. Williams stated that “a student or any person on the campus gets to decide if they believe that what they’re reporting is biased in nature, it’s in our job to determine if it is biased in nature [and] it was determined that it was not biased in nature.”

Williams noted that the incident is both a form of protest and vandalism, according to the College. She explained that “the protest policy specifically outlines that demonstrating any form of dissent or protest is allowed until it violates college policy.”

Williams expanded on this, saying, “Under our right to dissent policy, students have the right to spray-paint a banner, a sign, a wall they construct...the right to dissent policy specifically references the code of conduct, and that [says] vandalism is not allowed in any possible way. So it can be a form of protest, but it’s not a form of protest that is allowed on Muhlenberg’s campus.”

Students expressed their thoughts on the incident. Rachel Montilus ‘24, who also was the exhibition producer, dramaturg and co-curator for a Palestine art exhibition that was held on Mar. 2 said, “if you condemn vandalism as a method of



On March 3, a vandalized brick wall in the Village with a message reading “Free Palestine” was reported.

protest because it’s ‘illegal,’ you would have really hated Black people during the Civil Rights Movement.”

“I think I like that there is anonymity behind [the act of protest], but it is aggressive enough to cause attention without being violent or scary,” an anonymous student said. “It didn’t scare me when it happened and what was scarier was the fact that the administration got rid of it so quickly and yet still felt the need to make an email go out about it, despite the fact that it was gone in 24 hours.”

“I think it was an act of frustration because there’s been a severe lack of publicity about it or just like any general state-

ment coming from anybody higher up,” another anonymous student said. “I don’t see a problem with spray painting something and having it be in a hidden part of campus. [It was] not really harming anybody or anything. It wasn’t on a public piece of art. It wasn’t actually vandalizing anything. It was a wall.”

Riley Konstance ‘26 added onto this, asking, “I think just like the location of it...was very interesting. Why did you put it in a place that no one really goes to?”

However, other students believed that vandalism was not the best way to protest. “I don’t think vandalism of any kind should be tolerated,” Marcos

Santiago ‘26 said. “I think there are other ways to protest against what you believe in.”

“Writing ‘Free Palestine,’ a wall by student housing isn’t going to really do anything in my opinion, except for intimidation,” another anonymous student said. They found it frustrating that the school’s response would be “putting an email about, ‘Oh vandalism is bad’ without saying anything about what actually happened.”

“The school keeps talking around things, I feel like,” they added.

Additional reporting by Amy Swartz ‘26

Arts & Culture

Call to action through art.
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Campus Voices

MILA course faculty compensation.
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Sports

Muhlenberg’s softball team stands strong.
PAGE 12

THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY

Serving the Muhlenberg College Community since 1883

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The Muhlenberg Weekly strives for accuracy in reporting and writing, but we acknowledge that mistakes happen. Readers are invited to submit corrections about errors in articles, and they should be submitted to weeklyeditor@gmail.com. Corrections are also brought to our staff’s attention by our own editors and writers. Our staff will review the suggested correction, consult with the author of the article, and issue the appropriate correction. Online corrections are located at the bottom of the article. Print corrections are located within the paper, on the page indicated in the online edition. However, The Weekly does not grant take-down requests for articles.

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We request that advertising material be submitted by the Monday preceding publication at 5 p.m. If materials have not been received at that time, the advertisement will not run and the advertiser is still responsible for 100% payment. We reserve the right to decline any advertisement that is misleading, inaccurate, fraudulent, or deemed generally unacceptable. This determination will be made by the Business Staff in consultation with the Editor-in-Chief. The Muhlenberg Weekly maintains a distinction between its news & editorial content and advertising. As such, advertisements will not be accepted if they imitate the general style of The Weekly, intentionally or unintentionally. Examples of this include, but are not limited to: headlines, bylines, fonts, and column-arrangements. In order to make this distinction, The Weekly also reserves the right to include the word “advertisement” on any advertisement that is deemed too native.

CAMPUS SAFETY NOTES

- 2/24/24
Suspicious person—Report of suspicious person in the LSC.
- 2/25/24
Vandalism—Report of criminal mischief on Albright St.
- 2/26/24
Traffic—Report of hit and run in the 26th and Chew parking lot.
- 2/27/24
Theft—Report of theft in Walz.
- 3/1/24
Fire violation—Report of fire violation in Keck House lot with visible flames.
- 3/2/24
Vandalism—Report of vandalism in Prosser.
- 3/3/24
Medical—Report of sick student in Prosser.
Vandalism—Report of a vandalism hate crime in the Village.
Medical—Report of injured student in the Trexler Pavilion.
Traffic—Report of motor vehicle accident at Prosser Hall.

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Working towards inclusion

SGA’s DEIB plans for this semester.

By MATTHEW KLINGER
NEWS EDITOR

Matthew Klinger is also an SGA representative

This is Muhlenberg Student Government Association (SGA)’s third year having a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (DEIB) committee. In past years, that committee has been focused primarily on hosting DEIB-focused events. Last year, the events hosted by the committee were popular and well-attended. In addition to hosting events, the committee was also responsible for providing DEIB training once a semester, as well as holding a diversity dinner to support various affinity groups on campus.

This year’s DEIB Chair is Bethany Qian ‘25, and they came to SGA with fresh ideas on how to better serve the student body and improve SGA’s DEIB initiatives. Bethany explained, “The biggest change for the DEIB committee this semester is a shift away from holding events and instead focusing our attention on administrative and procedural duties.” Such duties include expanding DEIB training at General Assembly meetings, making them monthly rather than once a semester. They hope

that by doing so, the committee will “be able to dive into specific DEIB-related topics and keep DEIB practices at the forefront of representatives’ minds. We don’t want DEIB training to be something that can be checked off of a semester’s list but rather keep it as an intentional conversation,” they said.

Because their mission is to serve the student body, it is of utmost importance that representatives do so with an awareness of their biases so that they can represent the study body to the best of their ability. To help prevent bias in voting, the DEIB committee discussed implicit bias at their last training on Feb. 21. Bethany explained the recent training, saying, “I led a discussion about implicit bias that the [DEIB] committee collectively planned out. We split the General Assembly into several small assigned groups to allow better conversation and I’m very proud of some of the ideas that were shared in the big group, as it inspired really insightful conversations amongst representatives. I wanted to emphasize the importance of keeping implicit biases in mind while voting, especially for club approvals and finance votes.” An additional part of the training included a case study,

where representatives could see the effects of implicit bias playing out. Following the training, representatives of SGA were sent an anonymous feedback form in order to ensure that DEIB trainings are touching on topics representatives wanted to learn more about.

SGA representatives enjoy the new diversity trainings. SGA Vice President Andrew Buckwalter ‘24 said, “I think they’re fantastic, especially breaking out into smaller groups where we can actually have a productive discussion where everyone can talk. I think the guiding questions so far have been fantastic in spurring on conversation.”

Recording Secretary Noah Berger ‘24 agreed with that sentiment, commenting “The new SGA DEIB trainings are an incredible step in the right direction to ensure that we as SGA are connecting with each other on important topics such as accessibility, implicit bias and so many more other things. Each of the topics we have discussed and will be discussing in the future will allow us to be a more cohesive SGA as we work to create real change on this campus.”

Jay Khoury ‘26 added that “The diverse identities of SGA representatives influenced the



SGA Representatives at the General Assembly meeting on Feb. 28.

different perspectives on stereotypes and implicit biases... The case study was a great exercise employed in the training. More case studies should be used moving forward. There have been instances where SGA representatives have voted ‘yes’ because they were scared that constituents would assume they were bigoted, [and] it’s important that SGA representatives know that they should voice their opinions regardless of how they’ll be perceived.”

The DEIB committee still has a number of things planned for

the remainder of the semester to continue their work of expanding DEIB awareness on campus. First, the committee will hold two additional DEIB trainings, one in March and the other in early April. The committee also wants to implement a student survey and feedback form to better understand students’ perceptions of DEIB work on campus and how SGA can support it. As of now, those details are still being finalized.

Additional reporting by Samantha Brooks ‘27

Election spotlight: A dictator, with consent.

What happens when people turn away from their own democracy?

By KABIR BURMAN
STAFF WRITER

84.7 percent. That was the percentage of voters who decided to give the incumbent president a second term as president of El Salvador this past month. This was, by all means, an expected landslide victory for a leader that transformed a country that, just less than a decade ago, appeared to be in a tailspin. The murder rates were once the worst in the Western Hemisphere, with the country recording an average of 18 homicides a day in 2015. With violence against women at record levels and children increasingly joining gangs due to a lack of other opportunities, the country was at a breaking point. Enter: Nayib Bukele.

Bukele’s rise appeared from humble beginnings in the small coffee town of Nuevo Cuscatlán. Winning his first political campaign for the city’s mayoral seat by only 169 votes, the narrow margin of votes failed to prevent Bukele’s bold plans. From the very offset, his campaign focused less on traditional party lines and more on a vision for the city that snuffed out crime and corruption while focusing on education. With the illiteracy rate declining from 15 percent to zero percent and only a single homicide occurring in his dis-

trict while in office, the young Bukele emerged as a strong candidate on a national stage dominated by aging voices of a civil war that had ended decades ago.

As old politicians and old policies increasingly failed to address the crisis of violent gangs across El Salvador, Bukele hoped to bring his solutions to the nation as president. Winning a decisive victory in 2019, change came quickly from the government. Known today more broadly as the “Territorial Control Plan,” it called for a surge of police and military forces into public spaces while simultaneously suspending constitutional rights such as protections against illegal arrests, the right to counsel and instituting prolonged imprisonment. With broad support from a public wary of gang violence, he increasingly bypassed the national legislature and reshaped the country’s judiciary—taking a hatchet to the system of checks and balances to become, as he describes himself, the “world’s coolest dictator.”

The result? Since these laws went into effect, the security forces have arrested nearly 75,000 suspected gang members, resulting in almost one in 45 adults now being in prison. The lack of due process and sheer scale of operations have also led to human rights groups



The National Palace of El Salvador, which houses the country’s government offices.

reporting 190 deaths and over 5,000 abuses related to the crackdown. However, since taking office in 2019, intentional homicide rates have decreased from 38 per 100,000 in that year to 2.4 in 2023—well below the Latin American average of 16.4 for the same year. El Salvadorians are finally regaining a sense of peace and choosing to return to their homes instead of fleeing their country. Why does this matter, then?

Despite the Biden administration’s hesitance to acknowledge it, the United States has been facing a growing crisis at its

southern border for years now, and El Salvador has historically been a significant source of these refugees. With leaders across Ecuador, Peru and Latin America increasingly drawing from Bukele as a source of inspiration, there are broader concerns about regional democratic backsliding. While it may be in America’s interest to see stronger governments stem immigration now, one must also caution against growing authoritarianism in the future.

Yet, while Western objective, rational and emotionless analysis might point to these faults

as reasons not to vote for such a leader, a recent interview with the editor of special investigations at El Faro, Óscar Martínez, might reveal an answer as to why El Salvadorians continue to support Bukele. “It is because people didn’t live in a democracy, they never have; they lived in a criminal regime where gangs raped their children. So, now, the state of emergency is the lesser evil. There are people who will accept having their son arrested if it means gangs won’t be in their neighborhood.”

Dismantling imposter syndrome

Effects on students pursuing graduate school

By Max Gorman
Contributing Writer

The Africana Studies & Latin American and Caribbean Studies Programs closed out their Black History Month programming on Feb. 28 with a talk by Brooke Vick, Ph.D., entitled “Dismantling Imposter Syndrome(s)/Phenomena: A Solution-Oriented Discussion.” This year’s Black History Month programming was themed, “A Love Letter to Black Mental Health and Wellness Initiatives,” a series organized by Emanuela Kucik, Ph.D. and Elena FitzPatrick Sifford, Ph.D., dedicated to identifying and talking about issues that greatly affect the mental health of Black students and other students of color. This particular talk was in conjunction with the Graduate School Preparatory Program (GSPP), and was particularly focused on imposter syndrome and its effect on students pursuing graduate school.

The talk was hosted by Kucik and Sifford, as well as Giancarlo Cuadra, Ph.D., of the GSPP. Kucik and Sifford introduced Vick, the primary speaker. Vick is currently the inaugural vice president for diversity, equity and inclusion at Swarthmore College. She was previously appointed as the first chief diversity officer and associate pro-

vost for equity and inclusion at Muhlenberg College, while also being a professor of psychology.

The first question posed to Vick asked for a definition, as well as a description, of how one may be affected by imposter syndrome or imposter phenomena. Vick defined imposter syndrome as persistent self-doubt in one’s skills and abilities, feelings of not having earned what one has achieved and a general fear of being exposed as a fraud. Imposter syndrome is also closely connected to experiences of anxiety and depression and a hesitance to take risks. While often experienced by people who have achieved great things, Vick describes imposter syndrome as disproportionately affecting people of color, because “the higher we get, the less represented we become.”

While the more common term in our society is “imposter syndrome,” Vick argues that “imposter phenomena” is more accurate. She argues that “syndrome” pathologizes the experiences of many, and indicates a diagnosable problem within an individual, rather than attitudes perpetuated by the broader culture to which one is exposed.

While Vick provided an in-depth overview of what imposter phenomena is, audience questions delved deeper into how in-

dividuals, especially students of color pursuing higher education, are affected.

The prevalence of imposter phenomena in underrepresented communities, especially for people of color, is typically context-specific. Vick described how the presence of racism, misogyny, homophobia and other prejudiced attitudes are often internalized and exacerbated by the environment one is in. Harkening back to her earlier point, Vick pointed out that when someone does not see themselves represented in an area, they ask themselves questions like “Do I belong here? Do people like me succeed here?” Because the answer tends to be no, Vick explains, the experiences of imposter phenomena are amplified.

Following the talk, Jason Rackas ’26, stated, “Dr. Vick provided an interesting perspective, especially in discussing how a lack of diversity and representation in professional spaces and imposter phenomenon can create a vicious cycle.” He continued, explaining, “Ultimately, the event was a great opportunity to gain an understanding of the profound impacts of DEIB (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging) practices in post-graduate academic spaces and beyond.”

PHOTO COURTESY OF S. BROOKE VICK ON LINKEDIN.



S. Brooke Vick, Ph.D., is the current Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Swarthmore College.

Rackas’ comments align with what many students and faculty members had to say about a version of this event that Vick did last year for the GSPP. This feedback, as well as this year’s Black History Month theme of mental well-being, provided the opportunity for Vick to come back and give another talk.

Kucik explained that recurring worries she and Cuadra frequently heard from students as co-directors of the GSPP inspired the event. “[Students] fear they are not as qualified or competent as their classmates, and this fear can be worse for students from underrepresent-

ed backgrounds because institutions are often set up in ways that reinforce age-old systems of inequity and power. When it comes to graduate school and post-college jobs, many students have mentioned that they worry about this feeling of inadequacy continuing, or even worsening, after they graduate from college.”

Kucik stated that “We want students to know that they are more than capable and qualified, and any graduate school or job would be immensely fortunate to have them.”





Muhlenberg College

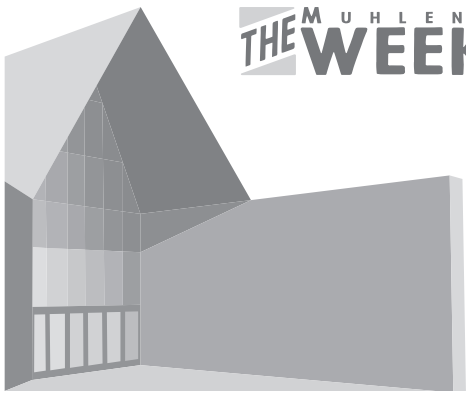
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ARTS & CULTURE

“I am deliberate and afraid of nothing.”

-Audre Lorde

Miles Grier, Ph.D., on “Othello”

The 35th annual John D.M. Brown lecture explores Shakespeare and race

By EMMA HOWSON
STAFF WRITER

Students who love, or don’t love, Shakespeare had the opportunity to attend the 35th Annual John D. M. Brown lecture and hear a refreshing take on “Othello.”

The John D. M. Brown lecture series, held in memory of the alumnus who graduated in 1906 and former Muhlenberg English professor, has been going on since 1987, with a two-year break due to the pandemic. Past speakers have come from all over America and the UK. This year’s lecture was given by Miles Grier, Ph.D., on Feb. 29 in the Miller Forum. According to his biography in the program, Grier “is an associate professor of English at Queens College and the Graduate Center, CUNY.” His book “Inkface: Othello and White Authority in the Era of Atlantic Slavery,” from which his lecture was derived, was published last year.

Before attendees went in for the lecture, some students explained why they were attending. The rhetoric included how the lecture sounded really cool and a love for “Othello,” plus, extra credit. One attendee Beck Mann ’27, who was also an “Othello” lover, added, “I don’t get extra credit for this, so I’m just here for fun.”

Ana Erickson ’25 gave her insight on how she felt before the talk, saying, “I had to read some of his writing for my ‘Othello’ class and it was really thought-provoking, so I went into the talk feeling super excited to see how he would elaborate all of that.”



Miles Grier, Ph.D., lectures at the Miller Forum on Feb. 29.

At 7 p.m., students and community members gathered into Miller Forum.

To the tune of crinkling popcorn bags—snacks had been served beforehand, Grier began his lecture with a question to the audience: “How would you describe the shape of racism in America after the Obama presidency?” Several people gave some answers which offered various perspectives. The consensus seemed to be that racism didn’t disappear once America had a Black president, because racism is interpersonal but also systematic. Grier seconded this interpretation and added his own thoughts, claiming that the character people are supposed to aspire to have is a standard created by white men. That is, forcing people of color to defy stereotypes to be considered worthy of society’s praise is just as problematic as overt racist actions. He then took the word

“character” and used its multiple definitions—the quality of a person versus a letter on the page—to pivot to his discussion of “Othello.”

“Othello” is a play about “a marriage between the exotic Moor Othello and the Venetian lady Desdemona that begins with elopement and mutual devotion, and ends with jealous rage and death,” according to the Folger Shakespeare Library. The term “Moor” was used in Shakespeare’s time to refer to the inhabitants of North Africa. To put it simply, this play is about an interracial marriage that cannot survive the pressures of the society in which it exists.

Throughout his lecture, Grier explored the interweaving of Black people and ink, both in the play and in the wider world around Shakespeare’s time. For example, he pointed out that Othello’s suicide note is punctuated with the line “O bloody

period.” He used this example to claim that, in a way, Othello “bleeds ink.” The next section of the lecture answered a question that some audience members didn’t think to answer: why does Othello “bleed ink?” Why does Shakespeare use that particular image? The answer, according to Grier, lies in the view that Europeans had of Africans at the time of this play’s publication. Many people in Africa had tattoos that denoted their rank in society, and before the standardization of English spelling, “race” was a word that could be used to refer to a person’s skin, but also body markings or tattoos. As such, he argued, ink was intertwined with the European view of Black people at this time.

Anna Hanley ’25 said, “We had a really in-depth conversation around the staging of ‘Othello’ and how it should be done as well as what purpose this show in our modern day society is

serving and who is benefiting from it.”

Grier’s other significant point lies in the way Othello seems to doom Desdemona simply by being in a relationship with her. For hundreds of years, productions of “Othello” would have a white man playing the titular role with paint covering his body. Before Othello kills Desdemona, he kisses her, and in those productions, some paint rubs off on her. Grier distinguished this from what we typically think of as blackface because of that transfer. This is what he referred to as “Inkface,” a Black character who “meets writing with the body,” “bears dishonorable slave stigma” and, importantly, “transfers that stigma to partners and children.”

He left the audience with this question: who has the power to decide who is marked and what those markings mean?

After the lecture, there was a short Q&A session. Once that was over, The Weekly approached Grier to ask him what it was like to give a John D.M. Brown lecture. He mentioned how “It is really an honor” and that “The people who preceded me I looked up to for years.” And it seemed he enjoyed the audience just as much as they enjoyed him, calling the room “vibrant and smart.”

“I thought that his answers were very thoughtful and I appreciated how he asked audience members to ask questions first. It made the space feel much more engaging and welcoming than other talks that I’ve been to,” Erickson concluded.

Faculty spotlight: Gabriel Jason Dean

By MEGAN HANSEN
CAMPUS VOICES EDITOR

Gabriel Jason Dean is a visiting assistant professor of theatre and writer-in-residence who has been making waves recently here at Muhlenberg through his involvement with the Theatre and Dance Department’s newest and highly successful production: ‘Berg New Works (BNW). The project aimed to give opportunities to aspiring playwrights amongst the student body and alumni community. It stimulated the process of developing a new play geared toward production in a world outside of the Baker Center for the Arts. What is es-

pecially valuable about Dean’s involvement is that his experience on BNW, in addition to the playwriting and creative writing courses he teaches, has all been informed by his experiences as an active playwright outside of the collegiate setting.

On Feb. 8, Dean’s play, “Rift or White Lies,” premiered at Luna Stage in West Orange, NJ. The play followed the story of two brothers— one a progressive novelist and the other a convicted murderer and member of a white supremacist prison gang—trying to reconnect despite the vast difference in their beliefs through familial love and shared childhood trauma. The play

explores important questions about the effects of ideological divide on interpersonal relationships and whether or not blood is truly thicker than water.

The play is unique in that, although predominantly fiction, it is rooted somewhat in reality, as it is based on Dean and his brother. Speaking on the process of playwriting of this caliber and the vulnerability that comes with it, Dean said, “I really struggled to write the documentary memoir version of this play. Knowing that at any moment if something got too intense for me, it was nice having the ability to move into a fictional place.”

Conjointly with such chal-

lenges, the process of bringing the play together was not linear. “It started in 2021 when Luna first commissioned the play,” he shared. “We were deep in the lockdown and the artistic director, Ari Laura Kreith, and I had the idea of something that could be experienced in the now instead of a traditional theatrical play. So the first iteration of ‘Rift’ was done over text, where audience members who signed up would receive pieces of letters, photos, text message threads and all of the ways me and my brother were actually communicating with each other. It was a true documentary piece, or what I’m calling, ‘performed

dramaturgy.”

Although the production watched by eager New Jersey theatergoers throughout February and early March is extremely different from the original version, it was still helpful in shaping his piece into what it is today. “It made me realize how pervasive this kind of rift is. Everybody could understand and relate to this, even if it wasn’t to an extent as extreme as mine, and I got to experience my audience’s reaction to the building of the story in real-time as opposed to in retrospect, which is what

[SEE DEAN PAGE 6](#)

MAC takes on Broadway

PHOTO BY JOHNNY VEGLIA '24.

By JOHN VEGLIA
MANAGING EDITOR

Divorced, beheaded, died, divorced, beheaded, survived! Muhlenberg Activities Council (MAC) brought students to see the famous rhyme live at “SIX,” the Broadway musical that re-tells the story of the six wives of King Henry VIII by turning them into pop music stars. “SIX” has won 23 awards, including the TONY award for best original score, and has proven to be a popular show. The musical is fun and upbeat while also allowing for these queens to reclaim the narrative and to do a “history remix.”

MAC’s visit to see “SIX” took place on Saturday, Mar. 2, with the bus departing from campus at 10 a.m. Tickets for the experience were \$55 per attendee and included a ticket to see the show, along with transportation to and from New York City (NYC).

“It’s so awesome that the school is able to provide students with subsidized experiences like this because it really lowers financial barriers that make access to Broadway shows and other experiences so difficult otherwise. I know that for myself personally, I couldn’t afford a Broadway show while still in school, but I’ve been wanting to see ‘SIX’ for so long and I’m glad that Muhlenberg was able to make that happen for me

before I graduated,” stated Rebekah Ayre ‘24.

After about two hours of commuting to the “Big Apple,” students had the flexibility to explore NYC and have some fun. Given the arrival time, students could enjoy a meal in the city, amongst other activities.

Ayre continued, “And it was obviously so fun to get to be in New York for the day. My friend and I got some delicious food and walked around Broadway a little before the show, so it was the perfect day.”

Previous MAC musical trips to NYC include “Wicked” this past fall to celebrate 20 years of the iconic musical and also “Moulin Rouge” during the spring of ‘23. The “Moulin Rouge” trip did not incorporate free time for students to wander the city. It was the same price of \$55, but the bus left campus at 12 p.m., instead of 10 a.m., on Saturday, Mar. 5, 2023, and required students to eat beforehand.

“While it was super rainy in the city, I had a great time exploring with my friends beforehand—especially because one of my friends had never been to NYC before,” stated Emma Northrop ‘27. “It was so fun to see the city through new eyes. We were able to visit different cafes, stores and even get lunch at a great empanada place (I totally recommend Empanada



The Muhlenberg Activities Council (MAC) organized a trip to New York City where students watched the musical “SIX.”

Mama).”

Following this excitement in the city, attendees then gathered at the Lena Horne Theatre to enter for the 3 p.m. matinee of the musical. Students who arrived around 2:30 p.m., and earlier, were greeted with a long line that wrapped around the block. After waiting in the rain, students then gathered inside the theatre and found their seats.

Merchandise, beverages and other elements welcomed students along with the traditional Broadway playbills. Then the curtain was ripped away and the show began, revealing the six queens: Catherine of Aragon (Khaila Wilcoxon), Anne Boleyn

(Storm Lever), Jane Seymour (Jasmine Forsberg), Anne of Cleves (Olivia Donalson), Katherine Howard (Didi Romero) and Catherine Parr (Gabriela Carrillo).

Megan Block ‘26 stated, “From the very second the show began, I was hooked. The ‘queens’ are amazing singers and actresses, I had a blast! It felt like an actual concert and I’ve been listening to the songs 24/7!”

“I’m lucky enough to have seen ‘SIX’ once before this, and I can honestly say it was just as amazing, if not more so, the second time. Catherine of Aragon in particular was incredible,” continued Northrop.

Following the musical, students had about an hour before the bus returned to pick them up at 5:30 p.m. to take them back to ‘Berg.

Northrop concluded, “There was about an hour after the show and when the bus showed up that was slightly awkward, however, as there was not enough time to truly go anywhere far but too much time to stand around doing nothing. If I could change anything about the trip, it would be that waiting period. Overall, though, I would go on the trip again in a heartbeat!”

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we normally do with a play.”

Dean also talked about how he was supported by Muhlenberg during his writing process for “Rift or White Lies.” Being the only active playwright on campus at the moment, he and the school are actively figuring out how that support may look for projects like this in the future. The school was able to offer time and money and even house the production’s dramaturg thanks to the provost. Amongst his colleagues, he specifically shouts

out Francesca Coppa, Ph.D., Dawn Lonsinger, Ph.D., and others in the English department for their contributions throughout the process.

This is not his first big project. He has written many original and award nominated works such as “Qualities of Starlight,” “In Bloom,” “Terminus,” “Heartland” and more across the mediums of theatre, film and television. However, “Rift” can be a lot to contend with, he points out, and he was more nervous to share this piece than he

has been with past work. “By and large, I feel generally supported as a playwright here, but we’re still figuring out what that looks like and what that means.”

Dean also spoke to the fact that the relationship between him and the school throughout his journey with “Rift” and generally as an active playwright has been mutually beneficial. Many students have helped Dean when interacting with his writing. “For me, I want to know what the 18-22 crowd is thinking about my plays. What I love about Muhlenberg students is that you all are really honest with your critiques.”

Inversely, the work he does outside of the classroom plays a big role in informing how he teaches. Questions he asks himself as a writer — why this story on a stage and why now? — are the same ones he poses to his creative writing students. He also hopes that seeing someone who is engaging with the craft of playwriting daily helps move students from the hypothetical idea of playwriting to the realization that it is possible to achieve.

“Playwriting is at your fingertips as a student,” he said. “The vision around ‘Berg New Works’ is that we need to offer our students a co-circular way to move from the safety of the classroom and the laboratory space into the real world of production.”

Dean acted as the artistic director of BNW, which opened this past weekend, with more staged readings to come in April. The production allowed aspiring writers to practice their

craft alongside him. “‘Berg New Works places the playwright at the center, and we are here to achieve their vision,” he said.

“The process that I am trying to create is based on 20 plus years of play development, not only for my own plays, but with other people’s as well. It was important to me that a taste of what might happen in a new play development process geared towards production out in the real world is simulated in this space, not just for the playwrights, but for the whole production team.”

Outside of BNW and writing classes, there are a plethora of creative opportunities for students on campus that Dean encourages students to use. Many student groups offer important festivals and series for playwrights to showcase their original scripts. He speaks to the educationally effective and supportive nature of the often low-stakes environments provided by projects such as the Red Door Play Festival and the New Play Reading Series, hosted by the Muhlenberg Theatre Association. “Go in there and do something that scares the hell out of you,” he urged. “Have some tough conversations. That’s learning!”

He also emphasized that all it takes is a script, a few people and a space to get your work out there. Being unable to partake in the set opportunities offered by the Theatre and Dance Department or student-run organizations should not be enough to stop you from creating and working. “You need to be your

best advocate, and at the center of your process,” said Dean.

Dean cannot stress enough the importance of reading plays out loud: plays written by others and your own. He shares his own experiences as an actor first, making actor friends whom he then recruited to read his plays in casual settings. Through this, he was able to hear divergences in his stories that helped with the shaping of them.

“We are moved by plays because they come from a passionate vision that starts with the playwright and then is achieved by all of this collaboration,” he said. “I know from my own experience from being a young playwright that it can be scary to say ‘My voice should be heard.’ It’s not arrogance. It’s passion and confidence earned from trial and error. That’s how I became a playwright.”

The cast of “Rift or White Lies” took its final bow on Mar. 3, as did the casts of ‘Berg New Works’ productions of “-in-chief” and “The Haunting of Hartfield Hall.” Dean continues to teach courses throughout the semester, while mentoring many students and continuing to work with the school to build a support system for the writing processes of aspiring playwrights at Muhlenberg.

Your neighbors at: 2301 W Liberty St

Call to action through art

Students came together to organize an art installation in honor of the lives lost in Palestine

By SHINAM HUSSAIN
ARTS AND CULTURE EDITOR

“The Hottest place in Hell is reserved for those who remain neutral in times of great moral conflict.” This quote along with the location of Trexler Pavilion, first-floor rehearsal hall, was sent around and circulated among the student body on the evening of Mar. 2. The message followed with another quote, “Art is not a mirror held up to reality but a hammer with which to shape it.” These two quotes conveyed to the student body one message—there was something happening on campus they should be aware of.

The message was meant to draw an audience to a student-curated art installation that took place in the Center for the Arts (CA) rehearsal hall. The installation contained a myriad of art forms created by a variety of student and alumni artists, that would evoke awareness for what is currently happening in Gaza and Palestinian territories. The installation was the idea of and curated by two students, Rachelle Montilus ’24 and Chris Rubingh ’24. They both expressed frustration and unease with the College’s handling (or lack thereof) of student responses to the inundate amounts of death occurring overseas and took it upon themselves to create a space where students can come together to relieve some frustration and bring awareness to an issue on the minds of the student body.

When discussing the idea behind the installation, and why it was significant to bring awareness through art, Rubingh stated, “Art can speak in a very visceral way which words alone cannot. We are in a place where art is taught, encouraged, celebrated—the theatre major is one of, if not the most popular majors here on campus,” Rubingh added, “I not only wanted to speak to the campus in a language it was familiar with but also make a statement about what we should be using our art and education for.”

Upon entering the exhibit, observers were met with multimedia forms of art. The walls were filled with frames of different forms of writing: poetry, letters and essays. Along with writing, the walls had visual pieces, including a piece by Emilio Ramirez ’24 that was titled “Untitled,” and represented the lives of children under the age of one who have been killed by Israeli forces. The piece had the names of all the children written and was illegible, to show observers the scale of how many children have lost their lives.

The exhibit had more than written and visual pieces, there were interactive art pieces where

observers were encouraged to fully immerse themselves in the art to gain a message, and audio and video pieces that triggered reactions from many. A piece that was near the middle of the exhibit was an audio and visual art form by Amira Jackson ’24, titled “Alma.” This centers a 13-year-old girl named Alma and in her piece, Jackson incorporates a two-minute video where observers of the exhibit were able to hear Alma pleading for her family and her own life, as they are trapped under the rubble of a five-story building.

Jackson explained, “I remember when I first saw this video and I was numb. I couldn’t fathom how terrifying that must’ve been and how afraid she was, yet all she kept saying was ‘help my parents, my siblings and my grandparents. And I thought to myself, ‘No child or human should have to go through that.’”

The idea behind the installation was not only to call attention to the ongoing violence and the lives that are being lost and affected every day but to also serve as a call for action. Montilus reflected, “It’s all connected. Everything is connected, and we are directly responsible for changing that. I hope people get a larger sense of community for people who are in support of the Palestinian cause. I hope the Palestinian students who are here on campus feel supported.”

“We could have gone a lot of different routes, either done a performance or staged a piece. But [Rubingh] was uniquely interested in making something visual, that would give people the time to learn and contemplate, and then have things that were irrefutable in front of them,” Montilus continued.

The room of the first-floor rehearsal hall where the installation was set up was filled with art. If you were not actively looking at a visual piece, you were hearing an audio playing in the background. This was to overwhelm the senses of the audience, to fully capture their attention and evoke enough emotion in them for them to begin to care about a cause they might not have understood fully before the exhibit. Montilus crafted an audio piece titled “Zanana” that played in the background of the installation and heightened the emotions of the observers.

“It’s a soundscape of sounds I took from Palestinian journalist videos online, street noises of children coupled with audio of airstrikes in the background, a baby crying in the hospital and a doctor screaming after she realized the victim being brought into the hospital was her daughter,” Montilus added, “They’re all from real footage; ‘zanana’ is the term Palestinians use to describe the unmanned Israe-



“The Calculation of War” by Chris Rubingh on display at the Center for the Arts rehearsal hall on Mar. 3.

li drones that fly overhead all during the days. ‘Zanana’ is a reference to the buzzing noise that played over the street noises the entire time.”

In giving insight into creating “Alma,” Jackson states, “This was my way of replicating the violence Alma experienced in a controlled setting that people have to engage with. They couldn’t turn the audio off or just swipe away, they had to stand and watch and listen to the cries of a 13-year-old Palestinian girl.”

The installation displayed different art forms by a variety of different students. All these students came together over a shared frustration and desperation to take some sort of action against the injustices being perpetrated against Palestinians. Each student came from a different background and had a unique grasp on what is occurring in Palestine, which was reflected in their art piece, and contributed to what made the installation so compelling.

Marissa Scharf ’24 gave her reason for being a part of the exhibit, saying, “Over 30,000 Gazans have been killed—each an individual with a real life. With family, friends, hopes and dreams. We cannot let them become just numbers. And we must fight to save those who are still alive.”

“As a Jewish member of this campus community, I felt especially compelled to speak out against the horrific violence being done unto the Palestinian people,” Scharf added.

“If this violence is being carried out for the sake of ‘Jewish safety,’ I must have it be known that I reject the notion that this

makes any of us safer. I reject the weaponization of Jewish trauma and grief. I reject this being done in my name and the name of my people. It has felt rather isolating at times to exist on this campus as a Jew who does not align with the prominent messaging of blind support and trust in Israel,” continued Scharf.

There was caution taken to ensure that the message of the installation would not be conflated with hatred or violence in any form. Montilus and Rubingh had crafted a mission statement for the exhibit where they clearly stated the objective of installation. They wrote, “To do this, we are looking to erect an art installation with the goal of illuminating the genocide in Palestine and the atrocities of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict and open up the campus community to a long overdue conversation. What we are NOT looking for: Incite violence/physical aggression on campus [or] platform anti-semitism.”

The exhibit was a one-day-only event, but it stayed with observers and artists alike in the following days. Maya Brooks ’24 said, “The art installation completely blew me away. I was so impressed by how well executed it was and how it was able to stay quiet until it mattered. Shining a light on the atrocities happening to Palestinians was much needed, especially on our campus. It makes me feel good that something like this, created by students with a desire for change, was able to be so successful here.”

The exhibit was clear in its goal: to spark conversation and spread awareness of the Palestinian cause on campus. It was

an outlet for many students to express their frustrations and feelings regarding the issue and the complacency of the College. It spoke heavily to many students, with people leaving the exhibit feeling a mix of grief, inspired and informed.

Lujane Alkhmos ’27 reflected, “I hope that the student body was able to understand the severity of what is currently happening to the Palestinians and understand that their voice matters more than anything. Social media presence, attending protests and being loud about the ongoing genocide is crucial to helping put an end to the circumstances faced by the Palestinians.”

If there was one message you were meant to gain from the installation, it was that we as people hold more power than we believe. There is so much more action we can take to fight for what we believe to be right. In a time where people may feel overwhelming senses of hopelessness and powerlessness, this installation was a reminder that action can be taken in many forms. Rubingh reflected on this idea in the exhibit’s opening statement, “Do not be neutral, do not be silent. I can not do everything, but I can use my art, I can speak and I can take the action I can. Take the action you can. Form an opinion. Interact and take in the art you see today and use it. Agree with it. Disgrace with it. That is your call to action.”

Should faculty members be compensated for teaching MILA courses?

By AMY SWARTZ
News Editor

A few weeks ago, I wrote an article about the Muhlenberg Integrative Learning Abroad (MILA) program. After numerous discussions with faculty, I gained insight on how much time faculty spend on their MILA programs. I had never explicitly thought about MILA professors getting stipends for their courses, I just assumed they did. After conducting interviews with faculty members about the new MILA guidelines, I learned that they don’t get any stipends for teaching a MILA. Professors get compensated the same way as they would for any other course here at Muhlenberg. For MILAs, professors act as educators, tour guides, chaperones, travel advisors, a liaison in learning different cultures and so, so much more. Yet, their compensation is the same as if they were to teach a 100-level intro course here on campus for 16 weeks.

The MILA program, along with the entire Department of Global Education, has undergone a significant amount of changes within the past year. Yet, the passion that professors have to teach these courses has stood unwavering, being a staple of the program that students can depend on. Professors are the backbone of the MILA program. Without professors who are willing to be responsible for a cohort of students for multiple weeks, as well as to be placed into the many aforementioned roles before and on the trip, the MILA program would never be possible.

This is much more than solely using a stipend to incentivize professors to teach these courses. Clearly, as Muhlenberg has multiple MILAs running every single semester, professors are passionate about global education and understand the importance of these experiences for students. Instead of incentivizing professors with these



The José Martí Memorial in Havana, Cuba. Photo by Katherine Conlon ‘24.

stipends, professors should be awarded stipends for their MILA classes because of their exceptional dedication to their field of study, as well as their commitment to the holistic education that global study provides for students.

A few weeks ago, when I asked Provost Laura Furge, Ph.D., questions on the MILA program as a whole, for the aforementioned article, I also asked her thoughts on professors not being granted stipends for teaching MILA courses. She responded, “Faculty can apply for summer stipends to develop new courses and pedagogies for their courses, including MILAs. The Office of Global Education is providing significant support for the MILAs and my goal is that [Global

Education] will be the primary logistical support giving faculty more time to think about their pedagogies.”

It seems that there is no push from administration to take into consideration the work that professors are putting into specific courses that give students life-changing experiences.

On Feb. 29, an email was sent out to all non-graduating students that all students’ tuition would be raised for this upcoming academic year. The only details of tangible opportunities that coincide with this raised tuition are a renovated Finance Lab and a mock prehealth application process. Though these opportunities have the ability to be highly beneficial for students, they only directly benefit stu-

dents in specific fields of study.

The MILA program reaches all students, as the plethora of varied courses piques the interests of students ranging from theatre majors, to political science majors, to sustainability studies majors, to English majors, to Spanish majors and many, many more students who find nuanced connections between their interests and what the MILA program has to offer.

The MILA program has the ability to make an impact on countless students here at Muhlenberg, especially with the aid that is available to students who choose to partake in the program. Providing proper compensation for MILA professors is the next step in this direction of making the MILA program a

facet of Muhlenberg that accurately reflects the values that Muhlenberg promises to uphold.

As per the Muhlenberg College Mission Statement, “Our faculty are passionate about teaching, value close relationships with students and are committed to the pedagogical and intellectual importance of research.”

Faculty members who choose to run MILA programs are clearly passionate about what they do, and go above and beyond in sharing this passion with the students, to a degree that is simply extraordinary. They should be compensated appropriately for this commitment and dedication.

Fat is not a dirty word.

By REBECCA SALKIN
Social Media Manager

Plus-sized, big-boned, stout, solid, thick, buxom, well-padded, plump, mid-sized, chubby: they all mean the same thing. Fat. A word whispered as if it was blasphemy, too taboo to be said too loudly. You refuse to say it as if simply by saying it, it is what you will become. The horror. The horror of existing in a body larger than a size two.

My mind shows a reel of early 2000s movies, where being anything bigger than a size four is a character deficiency. How did we get here? Where in our history did we decide that be-

ing fat is the end of the world? History might try to tell us that the only clothes we have left are the smallest ones, but that just isn’t true. Bigger clothes always existed, they are just more fragile because they were loved and changed and mended.

You judge me for something that I can’t control. You make it my fault, my problem. You make it my problem that our bodies look different rather than saying, “Wow, how cool is it that our bodies are capable of looking so many different ways? Aren’t bodies awesome?”

You can say it, fat. The world won’t end. I promise.



PHOTO COURTESY OF AHGOMAAZ VIA PIXABAY.



By enACT TEAM
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

To Muhlenberg Weekly readers,
Welcome back to the Fast Fashion Series, a multidisciplinary initiative brought to you by enACT to raise awareness of the global impacts of fast fashion on human health/wellness and natural ecosystems. Our first two events, which occurred last month, focused on clothing production and illustrated the lifecycle of clothing, something that we as consumers don't always think about. The fast fashion mapping activity, featured at enACT's last clothing swap, is something that will be continued throughout the semester. This event concretely illustrated the global footprint in terms of carbon emissions and the potential social and ethical impacts clothing has before it enters our hands. In the activity, students were asked to pinpoint exactly where their clothing items were made by checking their tags.

The mending and embroidery workshop hosted by the Historical Dress Society provided a communal space to be part of one of the many solutions to fast fashion—mending holes to extend the lifetime of clothing and support students in consuming consciously. Ella Rolin '25, who led this event, feels that “con-

sumers often think... that clothing should be replaced as soon as something small goes wrong.” This leads the industry to be the second most polluting in the world. Teaching people mending skills is a great way to develop an appreciation for clothing creation, emphasize the value in personalizing your wardrobes and reduce textile and fashion waste.

The Body Positive club (BoPo) will be tabling after spring break to “focus on the accessibility of sustainable fashion.” According to Anna Weiss '26, the educational resources and tips shared will “support people of all body types and financial situations in shopping sustainably.” Sustainable fashion can feel out of touch for many, and this education will showcase actionable ways that Muhlenberg students can get involved.

The story of a simple cotton t-shirt goes beyond the moment we purchase it at the store. We often don't think about what happened before—who exactly made the t-shirt and where? Peer Health Advocates of Muhlenberg (PHAM) hosted a tabling event to highlight issues of occupational health and garment worker safety. PHAM was very excited to join in on this big collaboration project because fast fashion is an emerging issue that

Fast Fashion Learning Passport

We invite you to grab a sticky souvenir that represents each event of our *collaborative* **FAST FASHION SERIES**, which strives to educate on hyper-consumerism and the social, environmental, and economic impacts of the fashion industry.

Catch us documenting the importance of fast fashion awareness with The Weekly!

Clothing Swap

Mending Workshop

Tabling Ed. w/ BOPO

Tabling Ed. w/ PHAM

Tabling Ed. w/ MHPA

Formal Wear Swap & Ed.

Clothing Swap

Sustainable Fashion show

Chalking

EcoFest

Questions to reflect on:

Are there any similarities in the impulse we feel to collect these stickers and the hyper-consumerism of fashion?

How much value do we attach to the items we consume?

How can we consume less and more intentionally?

Environmental Action Team
Muhlenberg College

can impact public health globally. Occupational health in correspondence with fast fashion is an aspect that goes unnoticed and we wanted to help bring awareness to this issue. Our goal is to let students know about how buying fast fashion can affect more than just environmental issues, but also individuals who work for these companies. “Occupational health is an area within public health which usually gets overlooked and under-

reported. This collaboration with enACT has helped us share this area of health in correspondence with fast fashion to our campus community!” said Karly Buchanan '24.

Events coming up include MHPA's Social Media Education, the Panhellenic Council's Formalwear Swap on Apr. 3, enACT's Clothing swap on Apr. 5 and more!

I hope that you attend the events, read these articles and

support the cause! Get updates on the series by joining enACT's email list, enact@muhlenberg.edu, or visiting our Instagram @enact.berg.

Sincerely,
Jessica Rosen
enACT co-founder and executive board member
with Anna Weiss, Karly Buchanan, Ella Rolin



Aquarius
You were a horse girl as a child, weren't you? #equestriansrise

Pisces
Make sure you do the liberal arts 360 spin next time you're gossiping. You need it.

Aries
Spring break will be a global experience. Get ready to visit the seven wonders of your childhood bedroom.

Taurus
Get yourself a chocolate chip cookie from D-Hall. It has your name all over it

Gemini
You are single-handedly bringing sexy back and we all applaud you for it.

Cancer
I'm sorry they make fun of your peanut allergy. I know they drive you nuts.

Leo
Please be sure to avoid any pizza slice with specialty toppings...

Virgo
Whip out the hot glue. It's time to craft. It might help the voices.

Libra
Start winking with your left eye. Gain some new perspective.

Scorpio
The recent sun has been killing your mystique. Take a walk through the art gallery to regain your coolness.

Sagittarius
Your finishing time for the NYT mini tomorrow will be an angel number. You're gonna think this means something. You're gonna sit there all day waiting for a text back, or that grade you're dreading. Stop. It means nothing. Go play Connections.

Capricorn
Spring is coming: teary eyed showers bring soft pillow flowers. Oh and check for dust bunnies under the bed too <3



Attention Class of 2024!
The Muhlenberg Weekly is taking over the Ciarla yearbook with the creation of a digital yearbook. All seniors should fill out the Google Form by using the QR code above this message. We look forward to your responses and creating something special for our senior class.

POLICIES

EDITORIAL POLICY

In certain issues of the paper, The Muhlenberg Weekly publishes an unsigned staff editorial written by the senior editors. Any such editorials that appear without a byline represents the majority opinion of the Editorial Board and thus, are the official opinion of The Weekly.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

It is the policy of The Muhlenberg Weekly to foster relationships with its readership, including through discourse in its Opinion/Editorial section. Therefore, members of the College Community are encouraged to submit Letters to the Editor on any topic of interest to Muhlenberg, in direct reference to an article or otherwise. See our website for submission requirements.

OPINION POLICY

The Muhlenberg Weekly views itself as an open forum for students to voice their opinions on all relevant topics. Opinions expressed in the Op/Ed section of this paper are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of The Weekly or Muhlenberg College.

GUEST SUBMISSIONS

The Weekly also invites guest opinion submissions if the author believes that more than 250 words are warranted. Individuals looking to submit such an article should contact the Opinion/Editorial editor (bergweeklyoped@gmail.com) or the Editor-in-Chief (weeklyeditor@gmail.com) to discuss the topic. The Weekly does not guarantee publication of guest submissions.



A family affair

By JAKE AUERBACH
ROOKIE WRITER

It’s a Saturday morning at Scotty Wood Stadium. As fans and parents find their seats in the stands, a familiar face has already found his spot. That spot, which hasn’t changed over the past five seasons, is seated at midfield. Ted May observes warm-ups like he does every week. Sporting his Muhlenberg lacrosse quarter zip, May chats with fellow parents about the matchup ahead, eager for the first faceoff!

Ted May is more than just a parent to his sons Max May ‘23 and Ryan May ‘24. He is their number-one supporter both in the classroom and on the playing field. The Mays have etched their family name into the identity of the Muhlenberg men’s lacrosse program over the past five seasons. Behind his children’s on-field success is a dedicated and passionate father.

Ted May acknowledges the pitfalls of overly demanding expectations from parents of their children – that is something he has always strived to avoid. Instead, he approaches being a parent and a fan from a place of support, “There is a fine line. You want your kids to succeed and understand that they have an opportunity to produce and be seen. Everyone has to know their kids’ abilities and support them without pressuring them to do things.”

Being proud of your kids and supporting them in whatever place they are in on and off the field is extremely important. He has seen firsthand the highs and lows of his children’s athletic



careers at Muhlenberg and has been by their side every step of the way.

Muhlenberg has been a place to call home for the past five years for the May family. Ted May’s love for the school has

much to do with “the lacrosse program. It’s the people. It’s great, it’s the boys who make the team. It’s the parents, it’s the kids. The relationships you make are more important than the program– those relationships

[Left to right] Max May ‘23, Ted May, and Ryan May ‘24 at Scotty Wood Stadium. make the program.” The people and the incredible atmosphere on game days are what truly create a sense of community for May and his family. He added, “The bonds that we have made here are truly special and [I] know they will last a lifetime.” The men’s lacrosse program will be heading to Colorado for their spring break trip next week, taking on Colorado College on Mar. 13 and SUNY Cortland on Mar. 16.

Behind the scenes of MuleTV

By HENRY STOER
ROOKIE WRITER

If you have ever wondered what happens at a home game but aren’t able to make it to the event in person, you can watch the entire event while listening to live commentary from your laptop.

Every Muhlenberg home game is broadcast online by MuleTV. With online broadcasting comes the many challenges of dealing with technology. For the team behind MuleTV, setting up and breaking down the equipment to stream a quality product is a complex and time-consuming task. The heart of the operation is a large, yellow streamcase that weighs upwards of 50 pounds. The case contains everything needed for the broadcast to work: audio and video inputs that connect to cameras and soundboards, as well as a full computer system that has the programs used to make the broadcast look as professional as it does. Everything runs through it, and if anything goes wrong, the broadcast is in trouble. For instance, if the cameras are not properly connected, the feed to the case and what the audience

will see online will just be a black screen. Or, if the audio is not set up properly, the broadcast might be silent.

For Aron Gianchandani ‘24, who has volunteered as a producer for MuleTV this past year, managing all of this before, during and after games has become a regular occurrence. “Working as a producer for MuleTV has been great. I’ve learned a lot about replays during games, communicating with multiple camera operators, and setting up the system for other members of our team to conduct interviews with players and coaches,” said Gianchandani. Ensuring that the broadcast is set up properly has been paramount for the students volunteering at MuleTV.

“The most challenging moment I’ve had is after one of the basketball games, we interviewed the winning coach, but we were unable to get the volume working,” said Gianchandani.

The process of making games watchable is tough, and for those working at MuleTV, they have to be at the top of their game to ensure a great and accessible broadcast for viewers.



Aron Gianchandani ‘24 broadcasts a women’s basketball game.

PHOTO COURTESY OF HENRY STOER ‘24.

.....

Spring season serves up tough competition for Muhlenberg tennis teams

By MARC SCHERER
ROOKIE WRITER

The warm and friendly confines of the Deitrich Field House weren't quite enough to help Muhlenberg's men's and women's tennis teams win their matches this past Saturday against a group of highly competitive players from Haverford College. It was a difficult day for Muhlenberg as both teams were somewhat outmatched in a string of tough losses. It was the second straight match where the men's team played a nationally ranked opponent, having faced #13 Swarthmore in their last match. The Haverford College men's team is currently ranked 38th in the national ranking of Division III programs. The women's team has had it no easier as they ran into #8 Johns Hopkins in their last match on Feb. 17, and a Haverford team on Saturday that has competed in the

last five Centennial Conference semifinals.

Despite losing the past two matches, the future of Muhlenberg's men's team, according to newly hired Coach Doug Maynard, is heading in the right direction. Maynard elaborated, "We have a relatively young team with some strong upper-class leadership that will help us continue to learn, grow and continue to come together with each match. Our strong freshmen nucleus will continue to improve as they get more experience throughout the season."

The team's young core was put to the test against Haverford on Saturday as all six players who played in doubles matches were first-years. Josh Benson '24 had some high praise for his teammates as a result of their play in the doubles matches. "We can hang with good players when we focus on it and get into the zone. It was also great to see

the improvements in our mental game. Owen [Dyer '27] and Matt [Miller '27] played a great game at second doubles which really brought the energy into their singles matches and both were quite competitive. If we can all play more like they did, things will fall into place."

Dyer illustrated the mindset of the men's team looking ahead towards the rest of their season, "From how well we did in this match, it only goes up from here. The teams we play in the future won't be as challenging as these last two have been so it's really looking good for us in terms of winning for the rest of the season".

After playing against two tough opponents, the Muhlenberg women's team wants to use the losses as a learning experience. The opportunity to play against top-level talent is important. Alexandra Downey '27 stated, "Playing against tough

opponents, especially in a mental sport like tennis, is always difficult, but it gives us as players the opportunity to evolve. Being able to evaluate our own and our opponents' games in the moment is a crucial skill, and playing against teams like Swarthmore and Haverford gives us that valuable experience."

Downey continued to reflect on the early season losses, "I want to focus on moving forward from these defeats and using them as launching points for the rest of the season. Skill improvement is just as important as being able to gracefully handle a loss and treat it as an informative experience, and especially considering how early we are in the season, I have full faith that we will take all of our matches, win or loss, as time well spent."

After playing their matches outdoors in the fall, both the men's and women's teams have had to adjust to playing their

matches in the field house. This adjustment, along with the idea of working with a new coaching staff has made this season all about adapting to a few new elements. Caitlin Bestrycki '26 explained that the women's team has had to adapt to challenging conditions. "Such adjustments, including the increase in court time that we have been able to attain so far this season, has been a huge advantage, as having only three indoor courts for two teams usually leads towards a slow start to the season. This, however, is not the case and due to the efforts of the coaching staff and leadership of our captains the potential for our future season is limitless."

PHOTO BY SIERRA ADDY '27.



Kety Gaidamashvili '26 returns a serve against Haverford College on March 2.

PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY '27.



Gabby Colder '27 warms up at Scotty Wood Stadium during a team practice on March 3.

Muhlenberg softball stands strong

By Lexi Sipos
Assistant Sports Editor

On Friday, Mar. 1, the Muhlenberg women’s softball team competed against Stockton University in Galloway, N.J. In back-to-back games, the Mules lost the first and ended strong with a win in the second. Their hard work in the off-season has prepared them for these competitions and future matches.

Sophia Cicchetti ‘24, an outfielder, has been focusing on perfecting catching fly balls. She commented, “Every practice, the outfielders have been preparing for season games by doing small drills in the field house or taking

time to go out on the turf to get fly balls off a bat.”

Cicchetti also explained how the team’s mindset has pushed them forward into their 2024 season. “We all have the same objective in mind, so we all put in a lot of effort both during practice and in games. When practice, conditioning or games get hard, we never lose sight of our end goal, to travel to Texas and compete for a national championship.” The specific team goals remind every player and coach of what they are working towards.

The interviewed players all shared the same outlook when it comes to areas of improvement. Dara DiMaiolo ‘24 discussed

what the team wants to perfect on and off the field. “After our first two game days, we are really focusing on communication and being exciting on the field. It is very apparent the difference it makes in our game when everyone in the field is talking to one another and being overly excited when something good happens.”

This communication and work ethic bled into their win against Stockon. DiMaiolo continued, “Our most recent game against Stockton has shown us that our hard work has paid off. We all came together positively, hit the ball well and communicated on the field, which are all things we have really worked on

in the off-season.”

This season will be the last for nine seniors on the team. However, they will leave a lasting impression on the younger players. Their grit and mentality to leave it all on the field are evident. Cicchetti commented, “My goals this season are to keep working hard, stay consistent and enjoy one last season with some of my best friends. It is bittersweet to think this is my last time playing softball after playing it my whole life, so I just want to leave it all out there and give it my all.”

From a similar perspective, DiMaiolo said, “My biggest goal as a senior is to fully enjoy my last softball season ever. I

have played softball for almost 15 years and made friends that will last a lifetime, and I cannot wait to finish out my career with them. My goal has nothing to do with my performance on the field. It simply has to do with soaking in every moment of my last two months.”

Ultimately, the players have outlined their spring season from their mental attitudes to their on-the-field determination. Cicchetti summed up her thoughts on this season, saying, “I am so excited about this season because this team has so much talent, and I am looking forward to seeing how far we go.”

Coming up this week in

SPORTS

March 7 - 13

Men’s Lacrosse	Softball	Baseball	Women’s Lacrosse
<div>MUHLENBERG at UNION COLLEGE</div> <div>Sat, March 9 @ 1:00 p.m. Schenectady, N.Y.</div>	<div>MUHLENBERG vs STEVENSON</div> <div>Sun, March 10 @ 9:00 a.m. North Myrtle Beach</div>	<div>MUHLENBERG vs GWYNEDD MERCY</div> <div>Sun, March 10 @ 3:30 p.m. Davenport, Fla.</div>	<div>MUHLENBERG vs WHEATON</div> <div>Mon, March 11 Hilton Head, S.C.</div>



IMAGE DOCTORED BY TOKEN FRESHMAN KIRA BRETSKI

wtf allentownw

The underage student favorite, Stooges, has been replaced by a new underage student favorite institution, the Church of Scientology.

Stoogentology comes to Allentown

By MEEGAN HANSEN
WORLD RENOWNED FATHER

A somber haze has settled in on Liberty Street this past week. Much to the dismay of many Muhlenberg students, as well as the greater Allentown community, the popular bar and grill known as Stooges announced the closing of its doors on Mar. 18 at 1:02 p.m.

At its prime, Stooges was a social staple for Muhlenberg students. It was a place where they could quench their Thursday thirst and indulge in the guilty pleasures of poorly produced pop music akin to a 2012

bar mitzvah playlist. “Stooges was an event completely on its own, honestly,” said passionate patron Hannah Arnold ‘24. “There was this wordless moment that occurred among anyone within a one-hundred-foot radius of someone who uttered the phrase, ‘Stooges?’ Everyone would sort of look around and wait for someone to say yes or no, but there was an understanding that it was always going to be a yes.” The collective notion that Stooges was the place to be is what solidified its high status, alongside its unforgettable variety of buffalo-based cuisine.

“So,” continues Arnold with

beautiful sentiment, “you’d put on your Thursday best and migrate over in herds, and you already could hear the early 2000s pop and R&B hits being remixed with Ed Sheeran singles from a block away, and your mouth would salivate, already tasting the four consecutive green tea shots that were waiting just for you. And once you got in, it was the closest thing to world peace Muhlenberg, Allentown or the planet will ever truly know. It didn’t matter who you were. Everyone was there to drink, dance and wear sunglasses indoors.

SEE **STOOGENTOLOGY** PAGE 2

Harring to be erected on college green

By HARRY GLICKLIN
LITTLE GUY

As reported by The Muhlenberg Weekly, Seegers Union was set to receive a multimillion-dollar renovation, but a new opportunity has thrown a wrench in that plan. Or, perhaps better said, it has taken the wrenches out entirely. They’re not building anything anymore. Muhlenberg now has its sights on something better.

Students have already expressed dismay about the renovation, stating “#NotMyPropertyBrothers” on all social media platforms. Many also feel that the expansion would disrupt the campus environment by being too loud. Yes, even louder than the music playing in your neigh-

bor’s dorm at 2:47 a.m.

There has also been confusion surrounding the intent of the renovation. “Nooo Seegers, you’re perfect! Never change,” said an anonymous student. It’s for these reasons and more that the College has opted to part ways with the expansion, and rather work to beautify campus in a different way— a new statue. Lots of names have been thrown around of prominent figures who could be immortalized as notable members of the Muhlenberg community. Frankie Grande ‘05, President Harring and legendary figure and Muhlenberg applicant “the apparently kid” are all top contenders, though all votes but one are pointing to the first two.

“I think the only obvious choice is to create a statue of

Kathy Harring because of the impact she has made on my life. One time, Harring asked to borrow my phone to check the hours of the Trexler Library, and I’ve never felt more famous in my life. That kind of lasting presence is worthy of a statue to highlight what community really means on this campus,” said an anonymous source who works closely with the president.

Radio Riff-Off Winner Hannah Winter ‘27 advocates for the other side. “I think Frankie Grande represents the few of us who have experienced rejection and have made something out of it. Frankie was famously rejected by The Muhlenberg Dynamics, and took it upon himself to make

SEE **ERECTED** PAGE 3



President Harring’s imminent erection as artistically rendered by Token Freshman Kira Bretski ‘27.

THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY

Serving the Muhlenberg College Community since 1883

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CORRECTION POLICY

the muhlenberg weekly has never been wrong a day in our lives. we r perfect<3

ADVERTISING POLICY

MONEY PLS GOD GIVE IT TO US PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE



CAMPUS SAFETY NOTES

3/18/24

Noise Complaint—Campo alerted of a noise complaint at the President’s House. Upon arrival, it was noted that President Harring was throwing a rager. She was spoken to and no further incident occurred.

College policy—Report of mooing coming from South Hall room. Upon arrival, Campus Safety officers found a petting zoo. The students were spoken to and the animals were removed from the premises.

3/19/24

Suspicious Person—Report of an unidentified individual in a red pantsuit seen trying to break into The Weekly office, supposedly attempting to steal the April Fools edition of the paper.

3/23/24

Fire Alarm—Students attempting an at-home bonfire experience set fire to their Prosser dorm. No students were injured, but dignities were harmed.

Suspicious Person—Report of an unrecognizable (assumed) human being emerging from the Trumbower basement, seething in the sunlight. The individual was later identified as a computer science student.

Missing Property—Report of the entirety of the Muhlenberg student population suffering from a loss of fun after the disappearance of off-campus housing.

Noise Complaint— Campo was alerted of students in Prosser blaring JoJo Siwa’s new song “Karma.” They were spoken to and told to carry on.

3/26/24

Damaged Property— Report of student destroying the computers in The Muhlenberg Weekly office after InDesign crashed for the seventh time.

FROM STOOGENTOLOGY

PAGE 1

And in the morning, if you didn’t have to wake up and drag your reanimated corpse to class, you felt well-loved by the universe as you scrolled through the blurry videos of people you’ve never met before. It was heaven.”

The Facebook post which bore Stooges’ parting words sparked concern across campus. With the removal of off-campus housing options and now the loss of what was not only a bar but a close friend, students are wondering where to turn at the end of the week.

“Heart been broke so many times I...I...” quotes an anonymous YikYak user. “Stooges you were the last straw. Why you gotta do us like that?” they share alongside a representation of emotions that have been a struggle to articulate: a broken heart emoji.

The ghost of Stooges will certainly live on forever in the now temporarily abandoned enclosure that resides just down the block, but rumors fly as a new breath of life has knocked on its familiar black doors. Hushed whispers ring louder than the

bell tower, begging and pleading for a new mother and gracious host to emerge from the rubble of a broken community for these orphaned Mules. Some speculate about the possibility of the bar becoming camp-cabin-style MILE housing for the substance-free living community, and filling the space with bunk beds. Some have heard murmurs about the opening of a new bar, but this was quickly debunked. Local information hub, 69 News, has tried to set the record straight about the city’s newest addition but has been met with restrictions and equivocal secrecy from the new renters.

Even with an entire week passing without a word about the future of Stooges, the community was not prepared for what was actually to come in its place. Eyes widened when students Sonny Berenson ‘26 and Jackson Dallas Smith ‘26 spotted John Travolta prancing down Liberty Street. “Yooooooo,” exclaimed Smith. Hammer in hand, Travolta allegedly began to remove the Stooges sign, replacing the family name with a new crest. Letter by letter, Travolta spelled out a new word, signaling the dawn of a renaissance of sorts in Allentown, Pa.: Scientology.

Not to be confused with the Illuminati, the United States Congress or SGA, the Church of Scientology can be defined as a business, a cult and a religion all in one. It rose most prominently to national fame in Los Angeles, California, and therefore houses many popular celebrities and influencers. Along with Travolta, there is Tom Cruise, Joe Biden, Charlie D’Amileo and more. With its long-standing reputation as a California nut house, the leaders of the church, who remain anonymous, believed that a move to the good ol’ city of Allentown would not only expand their horizons but subvert its infamy.

“I think it makes sense,” said YnnhoJ Ailgev ‘24. “I mean, an organization that attracts flocks of hopeful innocents, tricking them out of tons of money for brief moments of euphoria. It’s exactly what Stooges would have wanted.”

Stooges was, in a sense, a worshiped entity during its time with Muhlenberg. As Arnold previously emphasized, there was a collective dedication to the establishment that was rooted in sheer magnetism and enchantment. However, many

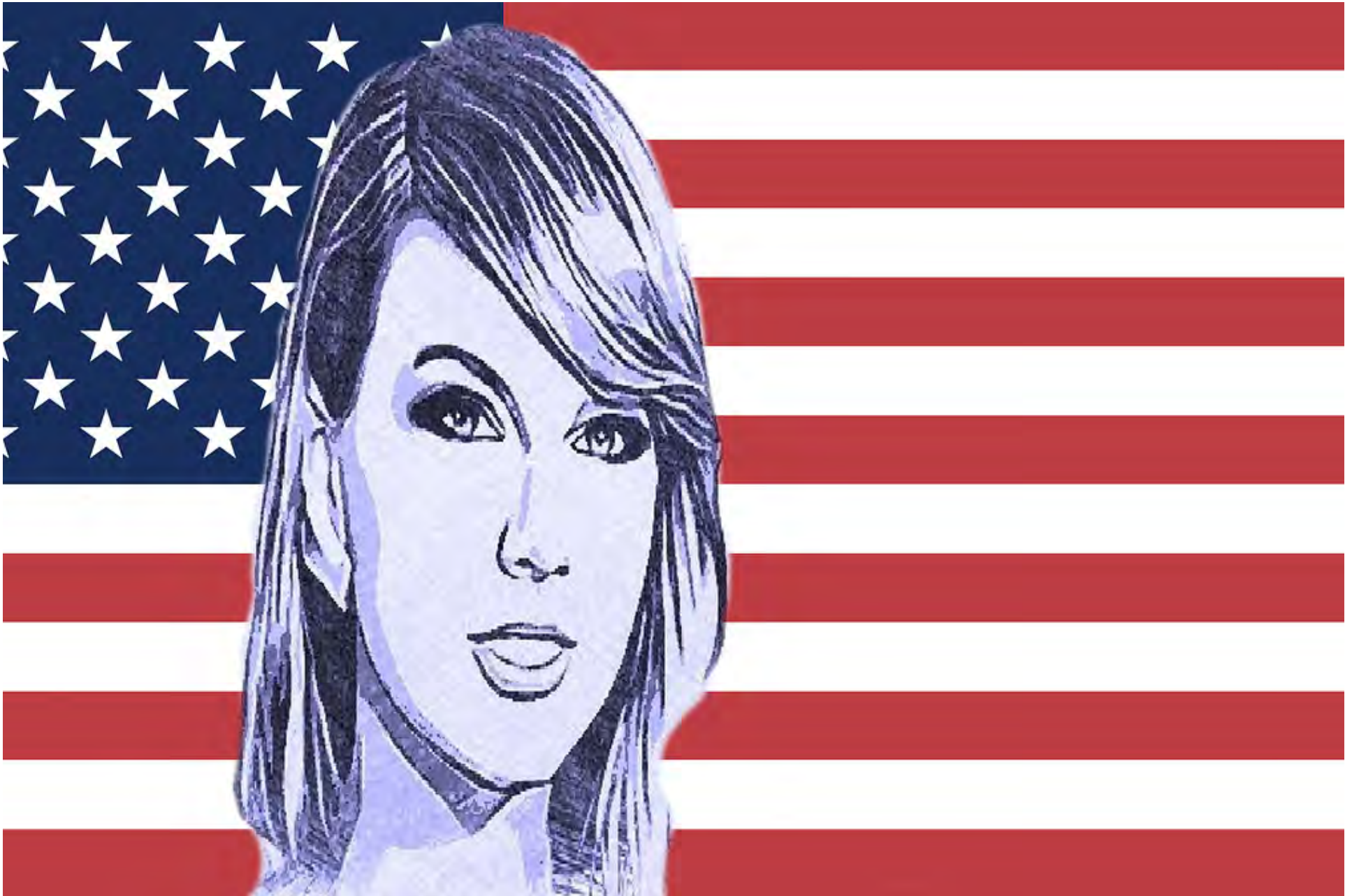
have responded negatively to the change.

“Ever since I read Dianetics, I have held a great fear that I could get sucked into the cult of Scientology,” said anonymous faculty member Sara Vigneri. “Therefore, I have avoided all and any Scientology-related entities for fear of getting trapped inside the cult. It hurts to think that I now need to completely avoid the block for my safety.”

Regardless of what the ambiguous communal impact will come with the introduction of the Church of Scientology in regards to Allentown, it is clear that the loss of Stooges has taken a permanent toll on Muhlenberg. President Kathleen Harring felt it necessary to hold a broadcasted press conference in Miller Forum this past Wednesday to address the matter, wearing a black pantsuit in mourning. When asked if she would attend “Scientology Saturdays”, she hung her head in shame at the very thought and announced that she would be boycotting the establishment indefinitely in the buttress of Thirsty Thursdays. However, she quickly winked to the camera, pulled a smoke bomb out of her blazer pocket, threw it on the floor, and ran

away behind the smog.

To resist the enticement of the Church of Scientology will be a challenge for a significant portion of the Muhlenberg Community. In honor of Stooges and on behalf of the Muhlenberg student body, there’s only one thing left to be said: Challenge accepted!



god bless america

Many Muhlenberg faculty members will be voting for Taylor Swift in the upcoming Presidential election as she is young and, most importantly, blonde.

Political Science Department endorses Taylor Swift for president: huge news

By KATHERINE CONLON
HEAD-BITCH-IN-CHARGE

On Mar. 22, Muhlenberg’s Political Science Department released a statement to the student body announcing their endorsement for US president. Who’s the lucky candidate?: none other than four-time album of the year Grammy award winner Taylor Swift. Now, even to the political novice, this pick might seem a bit out of the ordinary. The Weekly sat down with the faculty members of the department in an effort to understand their decision.

“I think Taylor is a great choice for our esteemed endorsement,” said Associate Professor of Political Science Ross Dardani, Ph.D., “All of the other candidates are old and not blonde. Taylor will bring something new to the White House, like...probably a lot more planes. It’s time for America to break up

with the current man candidates. Did you get that joke? God, I love being tenured, it’s so liberating.”

Entering the office of Professor of Political Science Jack Gambino, Ph.D., felt like stepping into a Taylor Swift shrine. Adorned with limited edition vinyls and countless bottles of Wonderstruck perfume, Gambino sat at his desk in his iconic navy blue Eras Tour sweatshirt. “Deciding to endorse Taylor was the easiest decision since my decision to see all of the Eras Tour dates in Australia. The 18-hour plane ride was totally worth it to hear the ‘New Year’s Day’ and ‘Peace’ surprise song mashup live. So, I really pushed for our department to endorse Taylor,” said Gambino.

The decision to choose Swift as their ideal president-to-be came from Muhlenberg’s Institute of Public Opinion, according to the institute’s director and Professor of Political Science

Chris Borick, Ph.D. “Well, we polled a representative sample of Americans and literally every single one of them said they’d rather have Taylor Swift as president than Biden or Trump. So, we listened! I think if she puts even half as much effort into being president as she does into those little easter eggs, then we’re set.”

Professor of Political Science Brian Mello, Ph.D., was less inclined to discuss the endorsement. “I had no involvement in this endorsement business. Up until about a month ago, I would confuse Taylor Swift with Ke\$ha,” said Mello. Instead, Mello wanted to discuss the new curriculum which was recently named “Explorecore.” Yes, this is the real name and not an April Fools joke, despite it sounding like one. Mello noted, “Explorecore is my brainchild; it combines practical work with theoretical think – hey!

Wait, where are you going?” For reference, I Irish-exited his office because there was no way I was listening to him talk for 30 minutes about the reasoning requirement.

Next, I stopped by the office of Professor of Political Science Mohsin Hashim, Ph.D. However, despite scheduling this meeting two weeks in advance and receiving three follow-up, reminder emails from Hashim, he was absent from his office. I later learned from an unnamed source (it was Dardani) that Hashim had triple-booked meetings for that time and was actually at Lehigh University participating in a mandatory workshop on time management.

Visiting Assistant Professor of Political Science Lindsay Burt, Ph.D., expressed confusion about the endorsement, saying, “I don’t understand why we’re even doing endorsements. Aren’t we supposed to be non-

partisan? I know I’m the newest one here but this feels weird and kind of...unethical. I don’t know, don’t quote me on...stop writing down what I’m saying...Katie I’m serious...Katie...”

The only faculty member to express deep discontent with the choice was Professor of Political Science Lanethea Mathews-Schultz, Ph.D. “As a die-hard Kanye West fan,” said Mathews-Schultz, “I am outraged that our department would endorse Taylor. Let’s set the record straight– he made that bitch famous...To be honest, I’m not sure what any of this means. My son just wrote some things down for me that he said would make me sound cool during this interview. Did it work?”

FROM **ERECTED** PAGE 1
space for himself among the a cappella community, creating the incomparable Muhlenberg Acafellas.”

Advocating for “the apparently kid,” um... me. Just me. I love him though. My king.

This statue would take the same 30 to 40 million dollars as the expansion, allowing it to be made of pure gold, shining bright like the Boundless stars they are. Any remaining money will go to-

ward the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the installment.

Zoe Chasinoff ’26, Chaimonics president, Alpha Chi Omega song chair, tour guide and Collegium Musicum soprano stated, “Personally, I was really distraught to hear about the cancellation of the expansion of The Seegers Union, however, when I learned of the purpose for the reallocated funds, I was overcome with joy. Frankie Grande is a mentor to me and an idol to us

all, and President Harring is also a wonderful choice – she is the people’s princess in a red blazer. Either way, you truly can’t go wrong.”

Given the work already done for the expansion, contractors are looking to place this statue (henceforth known as “tue,” pronounced “chew”) in front of the school, facing Chew Street. In regards to ‘tue placement, Sam Backer ’24 commented, “I think Muhlenberg has finally

found a place where they can put their money. What they really needed was a unifying factor on this campus. A monument would break down the divisions of the Muhlenberg student body, and unite us under one name, under one power, under one nation. In Kathy Harring/Frankie Grande we trust. Given that it’s facing the Lehigh Valley, not just the Muhlenberg body can appreciate the influence and aura of knowledge that these figures shed, but

so can the world.”

The ‘tue appears to be exactly what Muhlenberg students are looking for. All are looking forward to a shiny new monument to make a more beautiful ‘Berg.

SGA SGA SGA
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BY MATTHEW KLINGER
HARVEY SPECTER

Matthew Klinger is also a representative on SGA

The Muhlenberg Student Government Association (SGA) SGA
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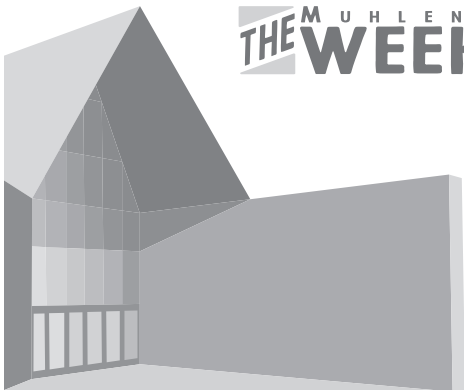
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This print of the SGA logo is identical to all other versions of this image. It is not creepier than usual. SGA, you may take this as a criticism. Photo NOT doctored by Token Freshman Kira Bretsky '27 without the assistance of Picsart's AI generative tool.

wow! as a student i feel so informed about what my money ad vote is going to! thank you the muhlenbergh weekly and sga representative matthew klinger!



THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY

ARTS & CULTURE

“Hard work never killed anybody, but why take a chance?”
- Edgar Bergen

PHOTO DOCTORED BY TOKEN FRESHMAN KIRA BRETSKY '27.



Harry Glicklin '26 in the typical state of a Weekly member on production night: deafeningly silent with an electrically charged glare and streamlined intentions of living to see this week's paper in print. In the background, semi-comatose editors Megan Hansen '26 and Amy Swartz '26 attempt to maintain civility in arguments with staff writers in the comment section of a Google Doc.

It's a musical!

By EMMA HOWSON
MEAN MR. MUSTARD

As part of this year's 'Berg New Works festival, Ally Duvak's '22 new play “-in-chief” graced the Studio Theatre stage. It was, by all accounts, a resounding success, with cries of “Harambe!” echoing across campus and dabbing making a resurgence among the student body. But what is one to do with a play of acclaim that draws attention to Muhlenberg's own student newspaper? You make a musical about The Weekly, of course!

In partnership with Visiting Assistant Professor of Theatre and Writer-in-Residence Gabriel Jason Dean (book and lyrics) and Staff Accompanist Vincent Trovato (music), the musical “Grammar and Spelling: A Weekly Story” will make its debut in Muhlenberg's 24-25 theatrical season. An anonymous student who spied on the season selection committee's final meeting from within the walls

told The Weekly: “There was a really intense debate as to what musical would get a spot in the season. ‘Grammar and Spelling’ just barely beat out ‘Seussical’ and an illegal production of ‘Hedestown.’”

When asked how and why this person was in the walls, they galloped away on their horse and cried, “Just say that my name is Caden Dowgin!” The Weekly tracked down Caden Dowgin '27, who denied ever being in the walls of the CA but did state that “My roommate Joe sometimes appears inexplicably in our room, even when I and my other roommate are sure that he didn't go through the door.”

“Grammar and Spelling” is very different from most shows you've probably seen at Muhlenberg. Taking inspiration from the new organization 'BergImmersive, this show is going to take place in The Weekly's office in the lower level of Seegers. Audiences will cram into the tiny room along with 18 actors repre-

sending each of The Weekly's editors, assistant editors and social media/business managers. For a slightly lower price, audience members can stand in the hallway outside and watch the action through the windows. “It'll be a tight fit,” said Harry Glicklin '26. “But the audience will get a good idea of what it's like to be in the office every Tuesday after 5!”

The plot of “Grammar and Spelling” will center around just that: a conflict between the editors over the titular topics. As rogue staff writers light fires around campus (whether they are literal or metaphorical fires is a central question of the show), the editor-in-chief and the other editors fight over the grammar and spelling in various articles across sections. In particular, the Oxford comma becomes a source of serious contention in the song “Fuhgedaboudit,” a vocal duel between the editor-in-chief and the Campus Voices editor.

When asked about being portrayed as an Italian-American New Yorker, current Editor-In-Chief Katherine Conlon '24 said, “It's weird because I'm not an Italian-American New Yorker. But I don't care because I'll have graduated by the time the show goes up.”

Other songs include “It's A/Lot,” both a complaint about the long hours spent editing the paper and one writer's proclivity to misspell “a lot,” “Shinam's Lament,” and “Where's Your Damn Article?”

While many students are excited about this new musical, it is not without controversy. Emma Howson '27, who was tarred and feathered by Conlon for using too many Oxford commas in her articles, is outraged. “I can't believe they're glorifying such a corrupt and malevolent institution,” she told The Weekly. “I'm going to stage a pro-Oxford comma protest at each of the performances so everyone knows what kind of orga-

nization you are, you censorious bastards.” She proceeded to slap me and then ran away. Assault charges are pending.

Zac Rejonis '27, one of the current layout editors, is also frustrated with the show. “The layout editor characters get, like, one line each,” he said. “What are we, chopped liver?” Yes, Zac, yes you are. For reference, this is a major change from Duvak's “-in-chief,” in which there was no layout editor in the cast.

Despite some pushback, the development process is continuing at a steady pace. The script is close to being complete and auditions are scheduled to be held in September. Megan Hansen '26, current Campus Voices editor, is very excited. “This is the best thing to happen to The Weekly in years!” I, for one, cannot help but agree. God knows we need something to spice it up around here.

the layout office would like to make it known that we will be going for the roles of EIC and Managing.

Artist spotlight: Frankie Grande '05

By SHINAM HUSSAIN
WORST DRESSED

Frankie Grande '05 is one of Muhlenberg's notable alumni.

A quick Google search for the word notable defines it as “a famous or important person.” So for the College, one of our most famous and important alumni is Grande. So notable that there

will be a statue erected in his honor on campus.

Best known to people who are not Muhlenberg College students as Ariana Grande's brother, Grande was a regular

trailblazer during his time at Muhlenberg and went on to continue his life with a career in the arts and serving as the brother of Ariana Grande. Grande championed three majors during his

time at 'Berg. Grande allegedly majored in dance, theatre and biology which would later result in a fruitful career as the

SEE GRANDE PAGE 7



“Meth Lab Oompa Loompa” (title assigned by the New York Post, not us) Kirsty Paterson tables for the new exhibit in Seegers.

Allentown’s Willy Wonka Experience

By JOHNNY VEGLIA
MISSING IN ACTION

The character of Willy Wonka has become a pop culture icon who has multiple film adaptations, a Broadway and West End musical and experiences. The most important experience delighted (or really frightened) families this spring in Glasgow, Scotland. The House of Illuminati, an entertainment company, offered families the experience of a lifetime with beautiful AI art to entice families. Tickets were only £35, what a steal, and the generous experience included one to two jelly beans per child and a performance of the lifetime thanks to an AI-generated script. The real highlight though was the Unknown, a true creature of nightmares for kids AND parents.

The event ultimately failed in Glasgow, but Allentown is the perfect second home for this misunderstood experience. After polls conducted by the Martin Art Gallery and Allentown Art Museum expressed people’s yearning for “real art,” the experience was decided to take over the CA. That’s right, Muhlenberg College was blessed with hosting this incredible event. Sweeter than fiction, the event

opened on Friday, Mar. 21(after rescheduling a sweet number of sixteen times) and delighted someone (maybe two people?). The price of tickets was \$20.24 for seniors, as part of the Boundless campaign, while it was \$88 for the rest of the campus community.

The white walls of the CA remained white with random string lights and mostly darkness for people to traverse the space. The only illuminated area was the Humanly Possible exhibit, which reminded visitors what is possible in a world of imagination.

When asked why the lighting was chosen for the experience, the creator of the U.S. version of the experience, Tals Acurev, mentioned, “With the wonderful performance of the ‘Unknown’ over in Scotland, we knew that had to be the core theme of the overall event. The darkness has won and also people can’t see the lackadaisical nature of the experience.”

The Unknown is the true hero of the Willy Wonka experience (U.S. Allentown supreme candy sweet version) as the entity has taken over the factory of Wonka. In the Glasgow experience, the Unknown was just an enemy that lurked within the walls of the factory and for some rea-

son would pop up from behind a mirror to terrorize children and generate some beautiful media artifacts. The enigma is even being developed into a Hollywood film, which will hopefully feature more mirrors.

“We know we need to capitalize on this future blockbuster hit. In fact, I asked during our development process, what is the Unknown? Where do they come from? What is the Unknown’s side of the story? That’s what we focused on and wanted to represent,” stated Acurev. “Let’s empathize with the marginal and allow for the Unknown to become known.”

This was accomplished by giving the Unknown lines throughout the experience. These lines added depth to the portrayal of the dark side of Wonka and helped to paint him as the real villain, which can be seen in all the film versions, frankly. The Unknown would scream, “chocolate,” “candy,” “walls,” “Where are you, Grandma? Where are you, Grandpa?”

“Hearing the Grandma and Grandpa line really got to me,” stated Ailgev Ynnhoj. “As someone who played Grandpa Joe in ‘Willy Wonka Jr.,’ it got me thinking about who this Grandpa could be. Is the Unknown Charlie? Have the cold and decrypt walls of the factory been the only salvation for poor Charlie?”

“No,” stated Acurev. “The Unknown is just the unknown. Who cares about that Charlie kid? Plus, everybody has a Grandpa, right?”

Beyond the Unknown, the experience also included the famed Oompa Loompa, aka the people’s princess, and a first-year portraying the title role of Willy Wonka. Ethan Slater ‘27 mentioned how this experience came to be. “Well, they held auditions for the experience here on campus and I honestly am pretty bored in my room so I decided to do it. I honestly am allergic

to candy though, and fun, so I made sure to include that in my resume.”

When looking at the audition sign-ups for the experience, Slater was one of two people who signed up, in addition to Liquorice Gumdrops, who is currently abroad in Candy Land.

The energy between Wonka and the Unknown was electric as the Unknown emerged from a mirror here or there while Wonka sat down and stole people’s jelly beans because they were “undeserving of his greatness.” Totally get why he’s the bad guy.

The two banners of AI imagery were small enough to cover at least one painting of the Martin Art Gallery to provide some world-building. Party City masks, the full-face silver ones, which were thrown on the ground throughout the Galleria and CA helped to immerse audiences in the headspace of the Unknown. There was no choc-

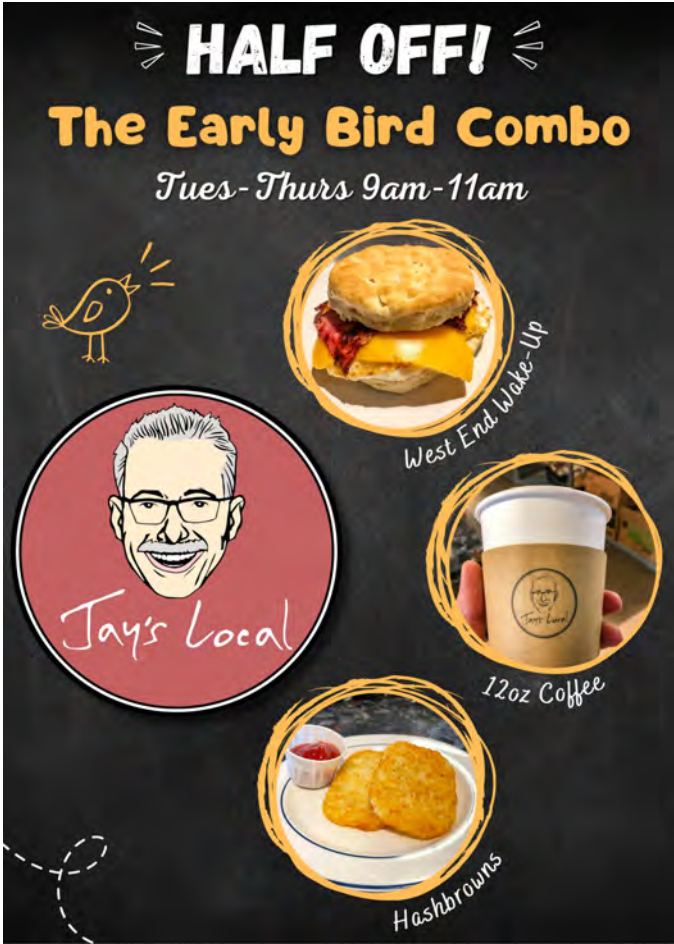
olate onsite though, following in the footsteps of the Glasgow version. There was no lemonade, however.

“It was the worst thing I have ever experienced,” stated Paloma Diamond, the Oscar-nominated actress. “Great research for my role in the Unknown movie though.”

“I liked the jelly bean,” stated Violet Beauregarde ‘24.

One YikYak comment did say, “Shoutout to the willy wonka (U.S. Allentown supreme candy sweet version)! Event of the semester fr!” Which was quickly downvoted off the app.

Acurev concluded, “That Glasgow guy might be doing bad, but I had a blast. So did that one YikYak commenter too, totally not me. Nothing like utilizing the premise of liberal arts performance ideas to scam people.”



real promotion! real ad! thank you jays 4 da moneys <3



In a remarkably justified statement, College President Kathy Harring issued a ban on all a capella groups. The performance group Acafellas, pictured above, have been rightly silenced; may they remain forever irrelevant.

Kathy Harring bans a cappella

By SHAIYAN FEISAL
ARTS EDITOR WHO KNOWS NOTHING
ABOUT THE ARTS

A cappella is music performed by a singer or a singing group without instrumental accompaniment. There are six a cappella groups currently at Muhlenberg College, as well as other song groups such as Great American Song Project (GASP) and Song Cycle. It is evident that a cappella groups have been an integral part of the arts here at 'Berg, and have been used during special events such as Through the Red Doors for prospective students and during orientation for first-year students. However, the

current president of the College, Kathleen Harring, Ph.D. has banned a cappella groups from performing on Muhlenberg's campus. In an email sent out to the campus community, Harring said, "I wholeheartedly agree with The Weekly article published in 2019 titled 'The Uncomfortable Truth about a cappella.' Groups sing the same songs over and over and the author, Will Wasner, has claimed that 'A cappella is just a regurgitation of popular music and it has been since its inception.' Since I am proclaiming my dislike for a cappella, I announce that a cappella performances and song groups

are no longer allowed to perform on Muhlenberg's campus." This has caused an outrage on Muhlenberg's campus. Many students are fans of these a cappella groups and are not okay with them suddenly being shut down. A Muhlenberg arts student, Lasief Nayiahs '26 claims that "I just think a lot of people, including Kathy Harring, think that a cappella has to be a group of over-emotional teens doing pop-covers, which is not the case, it's really just a term applies to any song performed exclusively by vocalists with no instruments." A member of the a cappella group 'AcaFellas' Clifford Terry '25 says, "I joined an

a cappella group to branch out of my comfort zone, and the fact that this is being taken away from me is heartbreaking. This was my creative outlet and I'm not sure what I am going to do for creative expression now." An anonymous Yik Yak comment claims that "a cappella is the most cringe thing and the people are somehow even worse than the music itself." Another Yik Yak comment agreed saying, "I don't like the extremely over-dramatic facial expressions and body movements. Whenever I see a group performing a cappella, everybody seems really smug." It is speculated that both of these comments were written

by Harring, as she did later follow up with a comment saying "Does anyone else think the College president is really cool and funny?" It is likely that protests will occur due to the banning of a cappella groups. Through the Red Doors volunteers emphasized that it should be done during the day that Through the Red Doors occurs so that prospective students know what they are getting into. Muhlenberg has turned into a place that cancels an art form just based on the opinion of one person.

FROM **GRANDE** PAGE 7

brother of a global popstar and successful actress, along with being the subject of a couple Instagram memes and TikTok trends. These memes and trends, along with his career as a brother to a world-famous singer and actress, speak to the versatility of Grande's talent. Grande's list of accomplishments and credentials are never ending: alleged triple major in his college days, brother of a notable person in Hollywood, James Charles look alike, Internet meme subject and according to a reliable source, Wikipedia, he is also a dancer, actor, singer, producer, television host and YouTuber. The "muhlenbusy" has followed Grande throughout his life. When The Weekly reached out to Grande for an interview for his spotlight, he declined. He noted that his schedule was currently filled with attending the Oscars, attending celebration parties for #1 debuts on the

Billboard charts and SNL all in such a short amount of time. All these events of course he was an attendee as a plus one with his sister, the lesser-known Grande sibling here at Muhlenberg, Ariana. Since we were not able to secure an interview with Grande for his spotlight due to his packed schedule, Muhlenberg students were interviewed about Grande and which one of his art forms has spoken to them or been notable in their mind. After showing a picture of Grande to Anna Hanley '25 and asking her what piece of art Grande has taken part in resonated with her, she replied, "He's a beauty guru on YouTube, right? He's a little problematic, that's what I know of him mostly, honestly." After this, Hanley was assured that the person she was thinking of was James Charles, not Frankie Grande. "Oh, this is someone else? Ariana's brother right? Right. He came to the College a couple

years ago for alumni weekend. He acts?" Hanley continued. Jack Riccobono '25 responded to the photo The Weekly showed of Grande by saying, "Love him. Gay icon. I didn't know he acted or did any of that stuff though, but it makes sense, what an icon." Add "being an icon" to Grande's list of credentials on what makes him a notable alumnus. Julian Torres '25 said, "All I know is he ate too many tuna melts from GQ and got like, poisoned. That's what he's famous for to me." Grande continues to be a notable presence in the Muhlenberg community, whether that be for mistaken identity with a famous YouTuber or his GQ order resulting in physical ailments, Grande reserves a special place at Muhlenberg, the one place he is known for more than his connection to Ariana.

PHOTO DOCTORED BY TOKEN FRESHMAN KIRA BRETSKY '27.



Frankie Grande stuns in new Instagram photo repping Muhlenmerch.



Java Joe's, known to the nefarious as ground zero for the Muhlenberg Mafia, is just as ominous behind the counter as it is to an unassuming customer.

Java Joe's: the mafia mystery

By HUGH JASS
CONTRIBUTING INVESTIGATOR

Java Joe's is a friendly, unassuming and delightful spot on campus where fellow students serve up your favorite caffeinated drinks. Or at least, that's what suckers think. Real smarties know that Java Joe's is a mere front for the Muhlenberg Mafia, an insidious crime ring that runs deep in the tunnels of campus. I used to be an innocent Java patron, like many on this campus, until I started spotting the flaws.

Firstly, and most suspiciously,

Java workers cannot be tipped. There is no tip jar to be found, no "add 15 percent" on the pay pad. If the workers were TRUE baristas, they would be allowed to be tipped...but they are NOT real baristas—they are mafiosos that just happen to be friendly and make a damn good cup of coffee.

Another suspicious thing is that Java Joes has no weekend hours. One might say that there are no weekend hours because there is not enough staff, or that students should not work on weekends. Yeah right, tell that to the student workers at the Trex-

ler Library. The real reason why Java workers have off on weekends is to do shady business work and send their enemies to sleep with the fishes in Cedar Creek. How do I know this? Because I go outside on hot-girl walks every Sunday, and I ALWAYS see a Java Joe's employee out and about as well. But they are not hot-girl walking—they are hot-girl criming.

One day I had enough of my suspicions. I had to get to the bottom of my questions, to see if I could quiet my suspicions. I stepped up to the counter, and instead of ordering my

usual, I looked the barista dead in the eyes and asked, "Who's Joe." The barista seemed visibly uncomfortable by my question, avoiding me and nervously laughing at their coworker. I asked again. "WHO'S JOE?" The barista answered, "I think our name is a play on words. No one here is named Joe."

That gave me all the confirmation I needed. It was a coverup, but the truth slipped out. No one THERE was named Joe...because the truth is, "Joe" is Java's Godfather, and he is too powerful to even step foot on campus for fear he may get mурked.

The next time I visited Javas after that interaction, my cup had a frowny face on it instead of the usual smile. It took a sip. The coffee tasted off. My first thought was that they didn't put in enough white chocolate syrup, but then my mind found the truth—it was poisoned. They were trying to take me out. I knew too much.

You, reader, also know too much now. Be cautious, be alert, and enjoy your Javas carefully, or you might be sleeping with the fishes in Cedar Creek. As for me? If a body is found after this article...you know who got me.

this is no joke. REAL AND TRUE! REGISTER FOR SUMMER CLASSES





Muhlenberg College

Summer Study

Register Today!

SUMMER CLASSES BEGIN IN MAY



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Tuition reframed

By Amy Swartz
A Modern Day Shakespeare

A dramatic reimagining of tuition expressed through the underused, underappreciated medium of blackout poetry

Dear Muhlenberg Students, Parents and Guardians,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] We continue [REDACTED] To [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] ram [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] financial strain [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] in [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] students [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] family's

[REDACTED] and will continue to [REDACTED]

[REDACTED].

[REDACTED] we [REDACTED]

need assistance [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] our [REDACTED] financial circumstances [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] in [REDACTED] rough [REDACTED] sum [REDACTED].

We [REDACTED] are investing in [REDACTED] new opportunities for [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] u [REDACTED] s, [REDACTED]

like [REDACTED] no [REDACTED] mo [REDACTED] re [REDACTED] application process to [REDACTED] dent [REDACTED] their [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] success [REDACTED].

[REDACTED] Last [REDACTED] ranked Muhlenberg

[REDACTED] out [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] of [REDACTED] graduate [REDACTED] school placement [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] remains exceptional, including [REDACTED] acceptance rate

of [REDACTED] 0%.

We [REDACTED] pride [REDACTED] these results [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] What [REDACTED]

makes Muhlenberg [REDACTED] dent [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] our community.

Sincerely,
Kathleen E. Harring, Ph.D.
President

The death of originality thought

By AILGEV YNNHOJ
VERY MUCH HERE AND PRESENT

The death of “The death of originality.”
The death of word vomit.
The death of thought? Who are we kidding, when did I have intelligent thoughts?
The death of saying the word “bestie” when addressing someone. Paige, your impact is dearly missed <3
The death of the OP/ED section of The Muhlenberg Weekly.
The death of YikYak.
The death of commenting random fruit emojis on YikYak.

The death of April?
The death of fools?
The death of April fools?
If a tree fails and there is no one around, does the tree be a fool and still make a sound?

The death of being able to enjoy GQ mozzarella sticks at midnight during the weekday.
The death of the current state of Seegers Union.
The death of the trees outside by Chew Street.
The death of the Event Space being the largest space in Seegers

Union.
The death of The Muhlenberg Weekly office in the Media Suite.
See you soon Trexler Library <3
The death of the current office spaces.
The death of Sara Vigneri’s diet coke collection in her office in the basement.

The death of Stooges <3 RIP to a real one
The death of Thirsty Thursdays at Stooges while the DJ plays the worst transitions you have ever heard in your life.
The death of celebrating St. Paddy’s Day on 03/23 without suffering in the rain.
The death of off-campus housing.
The death of ML <3 RIP to a real one.
The death of creating a comedic image for an article about mildew in ML that you did not write nor had any involvement with.

The death of working at Cinemark.
The death of seeing movies for free (crying for realsies).
The death of making pizzas for the Pizza Hut kiosks at Cinemark.

The death of AI art.
The death of AI machines.
The death of AI machines who make art.
The death of AI machines who make art and also write nonsense.
The death of AI machines who make art and also write nonsense while standing on one leg.
The death of AI machines who make art and also write nonsense while standing on one leg while rubbing their tummies.
The death of AI machines who make art and also write nonsense while standing on one leg while rubbing their tummies who are named Simon.
The death of Simon says.

The death of NYT Connections.
Create four categories of four (+ more)
The death of yellow, green, blue and purple.
The death of the most random categories that one can think of.
The death of colors being spelled with the wrong first letter.

The death of the Willy Wonka Glasgow experience (read about the American version here)
The death of “Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory” (1971)

The death of “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory” (2005)
The death of “Wonka” (2023), now streaming on MAX
The death of candy?
The death of chocolate?
The death of enlarging bubble gum that leads to people eventually having to be popped.

The death of duality.
The death of using duality when it has no justification of being said and therefore creates more confusion.
The death of someone asking me why I used duality and then having no answer as to why.
The death of just saying duality for fun.
The duality of death.
The duality of the duality of death.
The duality of the duality of the duality of death.
Duality.

The death of the duality of self.
The death of self?
The death of me?
The old Johnny can’t come to the phone right now, I’m sorry he’s dead (or in the most magical place on Earth).



This photo just appeared in the Muhlenberg Weekly’s shared photo drive. We don’t know where it came from. Please help us. We’re scared.

Kickin’ it into high gear

By EVAN SCHLOTTERBECK
AVID FISHERMAN

Think for a second... you’re back in elementary school, and your gym teacher is heading toward the closet full of sports equipment– joy for some, horror for others. Wherever you fall on that spectrum, be honest, a little piece of you wanted the teacher to emerge with a chalky, rubbery kickball.

On Friday, Mar. 22, Muhlenberg College Athletics announced that the school will officially sponsor a staff kickball team beginning in the spring of 2025. The decision comes off the back of an uncontrollable wave of recreational kickball interest from members of the College’s staff. To be blunt, so many Muhlenberg staff are now partaking in recreational kickball that their sponsorship request was inevitable.

Associate Director of Fraternity and Sorority Life Natalie Shaw, a well-known and skilled kickball fanatic, first joined a recreational team with her colleague and Director of Student Transitions and Family Programs, Tim Black, over a year ago, and the rate at which kickball has gained traction within Muhlenberg staff is unprecedented. Shaw commented, “There is quite a large presence of staff members that we recruited to the team. We have people from

Campus Safety, Housing & Residence Life, Prevention Education and Student Life playing and have had quite a few Muhlenberg spectators.”

Now, why kickball? And why a staff team? According to Boston Ski and Sports Club, kickball is one of the country’s most popular recreational sports for adults. Anyone can play, home runs are easy, players can’t really strike out, and, like any team sport, organized kickball is a great way to socialize within and integrate into a community. That new community, in this case, is Centennial Conference (CC) athletics, a governing body that is eager to expand its repertoire and welcome staff kickballers from all 11 institutions.

Shaw echoed the feelings within the team after the announcement, “I’m grateful that Muhlenberg has recognized our talent on the kickball field. We spend a lot of time conditioning over the off-season and I’m excited to watch that hard work pay off and bring home a championship next year. For the remainder of the semester, I will be taking all of my meetings out on the field to make sure I prioritize the thing that’s most important– kickball.”*

Seasonal competition for staff kickball will take place as a spring sport, with each team playing a 16-game regular season schedule; six



Muhlenberg faculty enjoy a recreational kickball game. Photo courtesy of Tim Black

out-of-conference games and ten against CC opponents. Similar to most team sports within the conference, the six CC kickballers with the best in-conference record will qualify for the postseason. The top two teams in the table will receive first-round byes. The highest seeds in every play-off match will host all the way to the final, where the best kickers will prevail as champions..

How can you get involved with and support the team today? The team has announced plans to hold open tryouts that are to be announced shortly, with reports saying the beginning of May is likely. Since there is already an unofficial Muhlenberg staff kickball

team currently battling through a grueling season, their focus is on bringing home silverware and will shift toward expanding the roster come the off-season. The team has also announced that there will be a Muhlenberg staff kickball team store to open soon where any fan can grab a shirt, hat, jacket, or scarf and spread the news about Muhlenberg’s newest squad, and a groundbreaking one at that.

For anyone potentially interested, Black commented on what he has enjoyed about his experience with kickball thus far. “For me, continuing to hone my skills as a competitive kickballer has been the most rewarding part. I know the

Olympics aren’t in sight right now, but with our skills, I can see us making it there in 2028.”

Come next spring, Scotty Wood Stadium will be packed with kickball enthusiasts, fellow Mules and anyone who wants to appreciate precision and dominance like they have never seen. Keep an eye out for more news about Muhlenberg staff kickball, or contact Captains Natalie Shaw or Tim Black for more information about the team.

*Upon further notice, Natalie Shaw will actually be taking meetings in her office.

Real promotion! Eat food after you commence!

2024 Commencement Luncheon



dining.muhlenberg.edu

Immediately following commencement ceremonies, graduates, families and guests are invited to attend an all-you-care-to-eat buffet luncheon in the Wood Dining Commons.

Tickets:



Defend the M

By OLIVIA OBERMAN
WASHED UP ATHLETE

The Allentown and Bethlehem City councils have always disagreed over ranking the athletic programs of Muhlenberg College versus Moravian University. This rivalry has been felt between the Mules and Hounds in all opposing athletic competitions throughout Lehigh Valley history. Instead of revisiting their annual argument, they have decided to propose a different approach in 2024. Determined to settle the historical dispute once and for all, they will put the institutions against each other in a campus-wide duel this upcoming Monday.

Muhlenberg participants, please wear cardinal and arrive at Cedar Creek Park at 5 a.m. sharp on Monday, Apr. 1., to participate in a quick warm-up before the starting whistles sound at 9 a.m. All classes, lifts, and practices will be excused for participating athletes and fans. Each team is also responsible for their equipment which will be transported by one bus. All participants will be walking side-by-side with actual mules to the park to ensure an intimidating arrival, so

please limit personal items.

Each athletic discipline will combine its men's and women's programs, where applicable, as one, to compete against Moravian's. For each competition won, one point will be earned for the respective institution. Muhlenberg will start the duel one point ahead, given that Moravian does not have a women's wrestling program.

No ties will be accepted for any competition. Any tie will be further determined with each respective athletic coaching staff competing against their Moravian counterparts. For instance, if Muhlenberg's soccer programs tie Moravian, Muhlenberg's coaching staff will be specifically taking Moravian's soccer coaching staff in the beep test.

To take the duel to another level, it is imperative that Muhlenberg's athletic faculty is included. Both Muhlenberg's and Moravian's athletic training departments have been recruited to participate in a serious dodgeball tournament. An ultimate frisbee competition has also been requested between the Athletic Directors of each institution,

as well as a tennis match between Sports Information Directors.

Further, each Institution's Board of Trustees members have been asked to race in a half-marathon around Cedar Creek Park in an attempt to fill the first five finisher slots with descending point values attached. Finally, the last competition of the day would request for each institution's President and Dean of Students to compete against one another in a culminating pickleball match. If this final

match results in a tie, all 2023 First-team All-Conference athletes from each institution will take part in a poetry slam.

Members of both institutions' student-run newspapers will act as referees for each prospective competition.

The institutional winner will automatically win every sporting event against each other in the regular seasons for the time to come, unless of course, Muhlenberg loses. If Muhlenberg loses, then the duel does not mat-

ter and regular seasons will proceed as usual.

Good thing, there is no instance where Muhlenberg loses.



This relatively vague promotional poster has been circulated by a strangely font-concerned member of the Muhlenberg Athletics Department. Photo doctored by Token Freshman Kira Bretsky '27.

Muhlenberg to add pickleball as official sport

By OLIVIA OBERMAN
WASHED UP ATHLETE

On Apr. 1, 2024, Muhlenberg College and the Centennial Conference will be announcing pickleball as a new official sport. In order to get a head start on developing a competitive pickleball program on campus, Muhlenberg has already set up a tryout session for Monday afternoon. Professor Sara Vigneri is ecstatic to be coaching the program, although she is not aware of her role yet.

The tryouts will take place at 4 p.m. on Apr. 1 and the first official match has been pre-planned between Muhlenberg and town locals for the same day as tryouts at 7 p.m. Please wear green socks, green shorts, a green hat and a cardinal shirt to tryouts.

The tryout will also provide instruction for those who have never played before. In an attempt to boost participation, Muhlenberg has also agreed to provide uniforms, rackets, matching sneakers and pickles to all participants. New pickleball courts are planned to be built on campus in the near future.

The Muhlenberg pickleball program team captain will be determined in tryouts on Monday through a quick round of pickleball trivia.

If you or anyone you know would be interested in participating, please email pickleball@muhlenberg.edu by 3:59 pm on Monday to reserve a spot.



The Centennial Conference expects pickleball to be its most lucrative sport. When asked how their nonexistent business model would turn a profit, the CC failed to comment. Photo doctored by Token Freshman Kira Bretsky '27.

THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY / SPORTS

Mule polo popularity:
Join the team now!



Construction of Muhlenberg’s alleged future baseball field has been redirected to accommodate the new Mule Polo team. The decision was easy, noted Plant Operations, once the four-legged members of the team ate the entire pitching mound. Photo doctored by Token Freshman Kira Bretsky ‘27.

By LEXI SIPOS
MIGHTY MULE

Muhlenberg is investing in a new sport to add to the ‘Berg family. American polo is a ball game performed on horseback. However, in a modern-day version, Muhlenberg is starting Mule-Polo performed on mules. The men’s and women’s teams will hold a roster of 14 people. We are excited to announce the new Mule polo teams!

The rosters are still in the making, so if you are interested please contact the athletic director. More importantly, a new team member, Savannah

Rode ‘24 is participating in the women’s mule polo team. She commented, “I am so excited to embark on this new journey and to represent Muhlenberg! I am looking forward to getting on our mules and attacking the goal. I definitely want to concentrate on growing a connection with my mule to make sure we are consistent on and off the field.” Mind and body connection with your mule is so important to team and individual success. The team is looking forward to creating a bonding experience with the mules and the team to establish a connection through mindfulness techniques.

Another essential aspect of these teams is team camaraderie. Since it is a new team, the players must not waver in their commitment to the team and winning. It is strictly live, breathe, sleep, Mule-Polo. Dara DiMaiolo’24 not only enforces this mindset but she is committed to setting an example for the rest of the team. She said, “I am ready to hit the ground running; especially with my mule. I want to keep the team competitive and hold everyone accountable. We are working towards a championship. So, it is essential that we push ourselves every day to excel alongside our mules. It

won’t be easy, but I’m willing to leave it all out there to set the bar high for Muhlenberg.” Safe to say, DiMaiolo is going to be the energy on this new team, and she will leave a great legacy for the younger teammates to look up to.

Ultimately, this team is going to be a team to be reckoned with. Having Muhlenberg athletes on mules playing polo was written in the stars from the beginning. This team was meant to be and meant to happen. We are so excited to see all the amazing achievements and accomplishments this team will achieve. The bar is set high

according to the current Mules, and they’re constantly looking for new additions! If you want to join Mule-Polo and represent Muhlenberg, reach out to DiMaiolo. They will connect you with your own personal mule. Once you have your mule, you will name it and undergo specific therapy with it to connect the two of you on a deeper level. Finally, the field will breed success, and we cannot wait to see the bright future of the Muhlenberg Mule-Polo team.

Coming up this week in

SPORTS

March 28 - April 2

Track

MUHLENBERG
at
LEOPARD INVITE

Sat, Mar. 30
Easton, PA.

Bat Sports

MUHLENBERG
vs
McDANIEL & FRANKLIN & MARSHALL

Sat, Mar. 30
Lancaster CedarCreek Field

LAX

MUHLENBERG
vs
AIRPLANE

Sat, Mar. 30
Los Angeles, CA

Hop-Off

MUHLENBERG
vs
EASTER BUNNY

Sun, Mar. 31
Memorial Hall



Ceiling tiles in Prosser Hall were removed where the flood originated.

Prosser takes a swim

Students evacuated as the building flooded

By Emily Nally
Assistant Campus Voices Editor

Residents of Prosser Hall, one of two first-year dorms here at Muhlenberg, were disrupted on Tuesday, Apr. 2, at approximately 11:55 p.m., with a fire alarm that quickly escalated into a serious issue. Damage was done by a student to the second floor sprinkler which had caused water to leak out through the ceiling and flood the floor. Both the first and second floors of Prosser were affected by the flood, but all students, regardless of where they lived, were quickly escorted out of the building and told to stay in Seegers Union until the issue was resolved.

Housing and Residence Life (HRL) communicated that they were alerted of the flood once Campus Safety was dispatched to Prosser Hall and observed the water coming from the ceiling. As soon as they were informed of the issue HRL and Campus Safety, along with Plant Operations and the Dean of Students Office, were on the scene in Prosser Hall addressing the situation. Groups were inspecting and assessing every room in Prosser, including the common rooms,

while others were looking for ways to initially address damage and stop the water flow. Dehumidifiers and air blowers were run through the hallways to further dry the building. All areas were also treated with a hospital-grade disinfectant, which is used to prevent antimicrobial growth.

While investigating the issue, it was confirmed that the flood was not sewage, despite speculations. Plant Operations removed ceiling tiles to access pipes and dry them faster. It has been communicated they are planning on replacing these ceiling tiles by the end of this week. Once the situation was fully assessed, the admin prepared for precautionary measures to be taken and began developing communications to Prosser Hall residents.

At 1:55 a.m., an email was sent to residents from HRL informing them of the flood and a subsequent meeting in Seegers explaining the next steps. A following email was sent at 3:44 a.m., which outlined more basics about the flood and rules to be followed for the next day in terms of who is allowed in their rooms and when.

All while the administration was inside Prosser addressing the situation, tired students sat in Seegers unsure of what would happen next. Natalie Preble '27, who lives on the second floor of Prosser, described the immediate interference that was caused while waiting in Seegers. "The flood really just disrupted the night," Preble said, saying that she was simply doing her homework when the alarm went off. "Displacing us really late at night and the fear of not knowing what was going on was difficult to deal with." Preble was one of the many who was nervous about the unknown. Some students weren't even in Prosser when the flood began, and were notified by friends about what was occurring.

Kirsten Ward '27 noted how she was coming back from rehearsal at around 12:30 a.m. when she heard the news. "I was unsure what to do," Ward said, "It was a lot because your bed is like the one place you look forward to going to after a seven hour rehearsal and I couldn't do that."

Students who lived in the annex, third floor, or rooms 1101 to 1111, and rooms 1201 and 1211,

were let back into their dorms after 2:00 a.m., but others were not as lucky. Jake Forstein '24, the Prosser hall director, lives on the first floor. They experienced immediate flooding in their room that left it so damaged they were moved to Martin Luther Hall, a mostly unused dorm building that previously housed sophomores and juniors and is now leased to local companies. Forstein is still living in Martin Luther Hall. "My room got the worst of the damage in the entire building," Forstein noted, "with part of my ceiling collapsing and there being about two inches of water throughout the entire room." He goes on to add that being a Resident Advisor (RA), his main focus that night was "making sure everyone was doing okay and providing support to professional staff as they were trying to control and secure the situation." Thankfully, the administration has been working with Forstein to replace any of their damaged items, for which they are grateful.

Many have expressed concerns regarding the damage that the flood caused. Parts of the halls in Prosser have no ceiling tiles and one room is damaged

to the point where it still cannot be lived in, all of which continues to disrupt the building's residents. No answers were given regarding how much money the repairs will cost, but it does have students wondering what will be done. With more issues arising each semester regarding the building (problems due to faulty fire alarms were prevalent last semester) some question if Prosser will ever get the renovation many believe it deserves. Gabby Zickmann '27, who currently lives in Prosser, noted how the building has leaned into its "Dirty Prosser" stereotype with all of the disruptions it's caused.

"With most first-years living in Prosser, you'd think it'd be nicer than it is," Zickmann said. "Even though the flood was caused by a student and not the building, I hope it will maybe inspire some retouching. Everyone knows it needs it." Regardless of what's in store for Prosser, there is no denying the disruption that occurred Apr. 2. The flood created an exhausting night for both its residents and those who were assessing the situation, with some still living with the effects.

Arts & Culture

MTA Studios Spring '24 take the stage.
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Campus Voices

Emily Nally '27 reviews Lizzy McAlpine's new album.
PAGE 8

Sports

Men's lacrosse beats McDaniel.
PAGE 12

THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY

Serving the Muhlenberg College Community since 1883

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The Muhlenberg Weekly strives for accuracy in reporting and writing, but we acknowledge that mistakes happen. Readers are invited to submit corrections about errors in articles, and they should be submitted to weeklyeditor@gmail.com. Corrections are also brought to our staff's attention by our own editors and writers. Our staff will review the suggested correction, consult with the author of the article, and issue the appropriate correction. Online corrections are located at the bottom of the article. Print corrections are located within the paper, on the page indicated in the online edition. However, The Weekly does not grant take-down requests for articles.

ADVERTISING POLICY

We request that advertising material be submitted by the Monday preceding publication at 5 p.m. If materials have not been received at that time, the advertisement will not run and the advertiser is still responsible for 100% payment. We reserve the right to decline any advertisement that is misleading, inaccurate, fraudulent, or deemed generally unacceptable. This determination will be made by the Business Staff in consultation with the Editor-in-Chief. The Muhlenberg Weekly maintains a distinction between its news & editorial content and advertising. As such, advertisements will not be accepted if they imitate the general style of The Weekly, intentionally or unintentionally. Examples of this include, but are not limited to: headlines, bylines, fonts, and column-arrangements. In order to make this distinction, The Weekly also reserves the right to include the word "advertisement" on any advertisement that is deemed too native.

CAMPUS SAFETY NOTES

03/17/24

College Policy—Report of excessive trash at MILE House, contacted residents to clean up.

Drug Violation—Report of fire alarm in Prosser Hall, upon arrival cannabis smell noted, possession of cannabis, individuals identified.

03/19/24

Lost Property—Report of lost phone on campus.

03/23/24

Sick Student—Report of sick student in Taylor Hall, MCEMS responded, AEMS responded and transported student to the hospital

Disorderly Conduct—Report of individuals urinating on N. 22nd St, area checked, officers spoke with nearby residents, no further incident.

Disorderly Conduct—Report of individuals urinating on Gordon St, individuals later identified and spoken to.

Traffic—Report of motor vehicle accident at 2201 Chew Street, APD also responded.

03/27/24

Harassment—Report of harassment in Seegers Union, individuals identified and spoken to, no further incident.

03/28/24

Sick Student—Report of sick student in Walz Hall, student refused further treatment or transport.

2024 Commencement Luncheon



Immediately following commencement ceremonies, graduates, families and guests are invited to attend an all-you-care-to-eat buffet luncheon in the Wood Dining Commons.

Place your orders before Sunday, April 14 to take advantage of our special pricing!

Tickets:



dining.muhlenberg.edu



Muhlenberg’s Institute of Public Opinion releases new public health survey

By MOLLY LEVINE
STAFF WRITER

PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY '27.



The Institute of Public Opinion is housed on the first floor of Fahy Commons.

On Monday, Apr. 8, Muhlenberg College’s Institute of Public Opinion, in conjunction with the Muhlenberg College Public Health Program, released their 2024 Pennsylvania Health Survey. The annual survey examined several public health issues, including opinions around health-care, mental health, and marijuana legalization. 415 Pennsylvania residents were surveyed in February and March of this year.

Christopher Borick, Ph.D., professor of political science and director of the Institute of Public Opinion, shared insight about the process and findings for this poll.

Interviewer: How are Muhlenberg students involved in the creation or analysis of this poll?

Borick: The Institute of Public Opinion is made up of several students who work tirelessly in analyzing data, assembling trends over time, and discussing key findings. I teach a course on Public Health Policy every spring. At the beginning of the semester, I asked about topics of interest that they would like to see data on, and tried to weave it through my design of the survey. Students this semester were especially interested in mental health, but also questions about aggressive driving and domestic abuse were included in part because of student interest. Now

students in the class are using the data to test their hypotheses and form conclusions about public health in Pennsylvania.

Interviewer: I saw that one of your key findings was that 41 percent of Pennsylvanians reported politics and current events as being a major source of stress, which was more than other typical causes like personal finances or relationships. Is this a regular question that is asked? What does it say about the impact that politics has on the mental health of residents here?

Borick: You’re right, that’s a new question that we asked this time around. This was the question that I was the most interested in when I saw the resources. I think anecdotally you hear a lot about folks being stressed about

the election, but to see it in the data is notable.

Interviewer: One of the key findings in this survey is that 54 percent of Keystone State residents consider opioid addiction to be a major or minor problem in their community. Were there any demographic trends with this question?

Borick: This actually was a question that was pretty universal regardless of demographic. With questions like gun regulation and abortion, things are pretty split down party lines, but I think because the opioid epidemic is so widespread that many kinds of folks see it affecting their communities in different ways, as opioids themselves affect all different kinds of people.

Interviewer: There is a question in this poll asking people’s opinion on the statement that the chances of a child getting autism are increased if they are vaccinated. Has there been a change before, during, and after COVID-19, when vaccinations were a hot-button issue?

Borick: After that theory was disproved, there was a steady decrease in folks agreeing with this. However, during COVID there was a definite increase in people believing or at least being more uncertain about this theory. I think now we see people leaving the middle and choosing to strongly agree or strongly disagree, which can be observed with many other political issues.

Interviewer: How does this poll affect Muhlenberg students,

and what should students take away from the field of polling in general?

Borick: It’s essential for students to have a working knowledge of public attitudes. We’re in a democracy... it’s supposed to matter what people think. Public health policy is developed around conceptions and misconceptions of different health issues. The Institute’s goal is to be engaged in public discourse. We want people to be talking about our findings and using our data to support their conversations.

Public health major Karly Buchanan ‘24 who is currently enrolled in Public Health Policy commented on the polling, “I find that examining how the public views these health issues is incredibly helpful information. It allows public health officials to understand people’s hesitancy or eagerness about certain topics.”

“I love looking at data, so seeing firsthand how Pa. residents feel on certain issues fascinates me. I think having the skills to be able to take public opinion and analyze it to create better policies in public health will be beneficial,” said Buchanan.

The full survey can be found on the Institute of Public Opinion’s page on the Muhlenberg College website.

Allied for change Amber Hikes spoke at the College on Mar. 26

By MATTHEW KLINGER
NEWS EDITOR

A couple of weeks ago, the College invited Amber Hikes to speak in their series “From the Ashes of Relentless Racial Crises: Creating a New United States of America.” Hikes, the deputy executive director of culture and strategy at the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), spoke about being an effective ally in an age of relentless opposition.

They started their talk by sharing about their morning. Earlier that day, they had been in front of the United States Supreme Court protesting a case that the court was hearing on access to abortion pills. When explaining their experience at the Supreme Court earlier that morning, they highlighted the importance of identity when being an ally. They quoted the national director of the ACLU, saying “This is not just the fight of our lives, it is the fight for our lives.” At a time when it seemed like many politicians

were against diverse groups, Hikes explained the importance of fighting for our and others’ expression of identity. “There is no waiting for your turn for freedom,” they explained.

Hikes then transitioned to explaining three practical tips for becoming a better ally. First, they talked about how to be a better advocate. According to Hikes, being an advocate means more than just campaigning for a certain cause or position. Instead, it means working towards a brighter and better future and directing people towards that future. That is no easy task. To help direct people towards a better future, Hikes recommended that people work together. “Nothing can be accomplished alone that is better than working together,” they said. Working together can also help keep the mission focused on building a better future. “We mustn’t be so distracted by our opponent’s future that we forget to build our own,” they concluded.

Another part of becoming a

better ally involves educating. To do that, Hikes said that we have to “clean our house first.” That means looking around and making sure that we are not just welcoming, but that we are bringing people in. Furthermore, that cannot be done alone. It must involve communicating with others to make sure that they feel included and can see you welcoming people in. It also means taking education beyond the classroom and into the dining room. For Hikes, to educate others we have to be willing to educate our family members first. Our family members are the ones who know us best and therefore might be willing to hear us out more. Change starts by educating those closest to us.

The last part of their talk focused on “finding your people.” For Hikes, having people around us goes further than just having people to support us. It also means having people we trust enough to tell us when we are wrong. Working for positive change is important, but we

cannot forget that we too are human; we also mess up. It is vital that we surround ourselves with people who can lovingly call us out and challenge us to improve. Ultimately, we cannot be effective catalysts for change if we cannot change ourselves. According to Hikes, finding our people also allows us to show the strength of our side. By taking advantage of the opportunities around us to treat people with grace and kindness, we can show that our position is one of care and not malice.

Hikes then guided the audience through a couple of different interactive exercises. First, they handed out blank sheets of paper to everyone and had people write down an advocacy idea. After a couple of minutes, Hikes then had everyone crumple up the paper and toss it to another part of the audience. After a few minutes of throwing, they had everyone pick up a paper ball near them and open it up. Then, those who resonated with the idea were told to shout

it out. Hikes used this to demonstrate that our ideas do not have to exist in a vacuum and we do not have to accomplish them by ourselves. There are others who share the same dreams and vision as we do, and we can partner with them to create effective change. They then led one more activity involving a Padlet, which is a digital discussion forum. Hikes had the audience put their motivation for being an advocate on a Padlet, and Hikes shared some of the most impactful whys. If people were comfortable, they could share the story behind their why.

Hikes ended their talk by stressing the importance of looking back and helping those who do not have the resources to advocate for themselves. “What good is our privilege if all it affords us is a birds-eye view of everyone we’ve left behind,” they concluded.

Boundless: ‘Berg’s latest fundraising campaign

By ADDISON STAR
STAFF WRITER

Muhlenberg is “Boundless,” but what does that mean? Despite the fact that the Boundless campaign funds multiple campus initiatives, many members of the campus community are still left wondering what the Boundless campaign is and what it does.

The Boundless campaign is a capital campaign, which is a massive campaign that is conducted over a set period of time and helps a nonprofit raise an enormous amount of money to increase its capacity and ability to pursue its mission. In Muhlenberg’s case, the money raised will be used to support the strategic priorities that were outlined in the “Muhlenberg Open Doors Strategic Plan for 2017-2022.”

President Kathleen Harring Ph.D. said that the Boundless campaign will contribute to her goals for the school because her

priorities are to “increase access to a Muhlenberg education and to provide high impact experiences for all students, no matter what their financial situation.” This, in addition to “hiring top faculty” and “state of the art learning experiences” are goals of Harring’s that are represented in the Boundless campaign priorities. The other campaign priorities include the Muhlenberg Annual Fund, Seegers Union expansion, the Muhlenberg Network, the building of Fahy Commons and the creation of endowed professorships. As to how the campaign priorities were decided, Harring said that “students, faculty, staff, alumni and trustees contribute[d] to the final plan. Muhlenberg carefully assessed its current needs and conducted a feasibility study to gauge support for these initiatives.”

Some of the effects of the Boundless campaign can already be seen on campus, like the

building of Fahy Commons and the Seegers expansion. When asked about whether the construction related to the campaign would hurt enrollment, Harring said that she believes it will not. She said, “Current and prospective students want learning and co-curricular spaces that are state of the art and that will maximize their experience across their four years and beyond. Even after graduation, Muhlenberg supports alumni through resources like the Career Center, a primary component of the Seegers Union expansion.”

The campaign was formally launched to the public on Nov. 13, 2022 with the inauguration of Harring. However, at the date of the campaign launch, \$71.2 million of the \$111 million dollar goal had already been raised. This is because most capital campaigns start with a “quiet phase.” Victor D’Ascenzo, associate vice president for development, said that

the quiet phase, which started on July 1, 2018, “is a common strategic step in building awareness of the campaign vision while engaging some of the College’s largest stakeholders to gain their support for that vision. The quiet phase creates the momentum on which the rest of the campaign is built and informs leadership about what is resonating with its various constituencies.” The College recently raised the campaign goal to \$125 million after a significant donation of \$15 million from the estate of Edward ‘42 and Lois Robertson. As of right now, Boundless: the Campaign for Muhlenberg, has raised \$104 million, 84 percent of the new goal.

According to D’Ascenzo, money being raised for the campaign, including the Robertson donation, “occurs through a combination of personal philanthropy from individuals (alumni, parents and friends of the College) and gifts and grants from

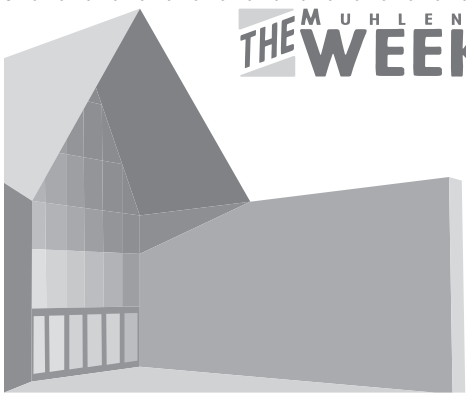
corporations and foundations. These constituents work with advancement staff, the College president, the board of trustees and many campaign volunteers to find philanthropic opportunities that benefit everyone—students, faculty, staff and the donor.”

When asked if there was anything that the Muhlenberg campus should know about the Boundless campaign, Harring said, “The momentum of the campaign powerfully demonstrates the confidence our donors have in the College and their desire to ensure that current and future generations experience both the transformative education we provide and the success they have achieved.”

Muhlenberg reacts to the solar eclipse

By KIRA BRETSKY
PHOTO EDITOR





THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY

ARTS & CULTURE

“The object of art is not to reproduce reality, but to create a reality of the same intensity.”

- Alberto Giacometti

PHOTO BY JEM BERNY '26.



Muhlenberg's Graver Arboretum.

Connecting with the world outside of the “Muhlenbubble:” A look into Muhlenberg’s Graver Arboretum

BY ALYSSA KAPLAN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

A mere 35 minutes from Muhlenberg’s main campus exists a space unlike any other offered in our campus community. Graver Arboretum, a widely underutilized outdoor space owned and managed by Muhlenberg College, is a mystery to the majority of students on campus. When I’ve mentioned the Arboretum to friends and peers, I am often greeted with many confused expressions and questions ranging from “What’s an arboretum?” to “No way, Muhlenberg owns something like that?” I was just as surprised as some of my classmates a year ago when I met Natalie Sobrinski, sustainability specialist and coordinator of the co-curricular and operational efforts of campus sustainability. Often coined as a museum of trees, arboreta are a beautiful example of how humans can engage with nature in a manner that does not cause harm to the living creatures who rely on these environments, while also finding joy and appreciation in their surroundings.

As I began working with Sobrinski as an intern for the Office of Sustainability, I was greeted with several significant initiatives and projects that were in varying stages of development. One of the proposed efforts involved increasing student engagement and awareness of Graver Arboretum and, similarly to many other students on campus, I was shocked to learn that this resource and emblem of natural preservation was not already on my radar. Sobrinski adds, “To improve the usage of Graver Arboretum we must make it accessible, engaging and integrated into academic and social experiences. Offering educational programs, recreational activities and transportation options can help make the arboretum a vibrant and valued part of campus life.” As a lover of nature preserves, arboreta and all things outdoors, I was determined to shed light on the opportunities available to the Muhlenberg community at Graver.

The 63-acre arboretum was gifted to the College in 1994 by Dr. Lee and Virginia Graver, who

were known and praised for their conservation efforts and love of nature. Since landing in Muhlenberg’s hands, the space and its usage have gone through many changes depending on its staffing and the student/faculty interests of the times. Tom Schotzbarger, certified arborist and grounds manager for Graver Arboretum is often at the forefront of making these programs and visits to the Arboretum come to fruition. Schotzbarger’s vast knowledge and passion for trees, plants and other natural elements have been an integral part of bringing new programming to life. This includes creative writing workshops both on-campus and on-site at the Arboretum in collaboration with Director of Creative Writing and Associate Professor of English Linda Miller and Stanley Road Professor of Neuroscience Jeremy Teissereire, Ph.D., happening later this month. Living on the Graver property, Schotzbarger is deeply connected to the Arboretum and its flourishing. When asked about what he believes makes Graver Arboretum special, Schotzbarger reflected

on how “Graver Arboretum has miles of trails, wooded areas, ponds, wildlife, meadows, 3,000 rhododendrons and a conifer collection of trees from different parts of the world. Connect with nature, feel the peace, reflect on and refresh your perspective about the world we share.”

There is nothing quite like stepping onto an arboretum. If you have never visited Graver Arboretum or another arboretum before, it is something truly magical. It’s hard to believe that cars are zooming by when the large, aging trees block their sound. The opportunity for quiet and connecting with the ground we stand on is often overlooked in the hustle and bustle of our everyday busy lives on campus. There are days when the sun sets and I realize my longest stretch of time outdoors involved my walk from Seegers to the sociology/anthropology department, a short seven minutes that do not begin to meet my desire to simply “be.” This is the case for many Muhlenberg students, who are often characterized for packing their schedules as tightly as possible.

When you are surrounded by trees, the world feels as if it can slow down, even just for a moment. Imagine what could happen if you committed to being outdoors for 15 minutes daily. What about 30 minutes? Or, even an hour? Each minute counts when there is an extra breeze that can land on your back. Outdoor spaces, such as Graver Arboretum, encourage you to slow down and look outside of the “Muhlenbubble” that spans across Chew Street. Find a few friends and take a trip down Route 22 to the home of over 150 species of conifer trees. You may be surprised by what you’re able to hear when the trees wrap you in their arms.

Alyssa Kaplan ‘25 is the Marketing and Engagement Coordinator for Graver Arboretum through her internship with Muhlenberg’s Office of Sustainability.

Spring 2024 Studio Shows: “Antigone,” “LOVE/SICK” and “Trail to Oregon”

By SHINAM HUSSAIN AND EMMA NORTHROP
ARTS AND CULTURE EDITOR AND STAFF WRITER

From Apr. 4. to Apr. 7., the Muhlenberg Theatre Association (MTA) catapulted audience members back to ancient Thebes, through the door to love and on the way to Oregon. A semesterly festival organized entirely by the student-run organization, the Spring 2024 Studio Shows featured three works, two of which were Sophocles’s “Antigone,” and John Cariani’s “LOVE/SICK.”

“Antigone” tells the story of the titular character as she rebels against orders to leave her brother’s body unburied. A tragedy at heart, the play highlights the dehumanizing nature of war. As a “social activist first and an artist second,” Director Bryson Brunson ‘25 shares hopes that the play communicates the truly destructive sense of war across time, even now with contemporary conflicts like that in Palestine. Touching on this, Hanajah White-Wise ‘26, who played Ismene, Antigone’s sister, shares, “I think making this kind of art is what we need to see especially when it comes to marginalized groups and people, so as Bryson said, it is an ode to what is going on in the world.”

One decision Brunson made that was particularly powerful was to include dance. Brunson shares, “Dance was something

really important to me in the use of storytelling because of the way movement captures what we cannot say with words.” White-Wise also shared, “I was very interested in the dance elements, and I was so grateful to have worked with Desiree [Oliver ‘25] as our choreographer.”

But the process wasn’t always harmonious, according to Brunson. “While we may have created a wonderful show, I would be remiss if I did not mention that at times there was a lack of care for me and my all-Black creative team while working on this production,” Brunson says. “Unless there are structural changes to the organization, I cannot in good faith recommend other students of color to work with [the MTA]. Black art is something they are unaccustomed to and it created a lot of issues on the production side of things because although they want to work with more students of color or they often failed to accommodate for the needs of students of color that our white counterparts don’t request.”

“But I want to reiterate that this is not a condemnation of the MTA,” Brunson clarified. “It is a call to action for them to work harder and listen to students of color to foster a space that is not just diverse but EQUITABLE and INCLUSIVE.”

Despite the challenges of the process, Brunson expresses great gratitude towards this piece. Brunson said, “[‘Antigone’] being my first directorial

credit makes me feel really proud of what I and other students of color can do on this campus in arts when we are given creative liberty.” White-Wise seconded this, stating, “I can say for my first show here it was amazing!”

However, “Antigone” was not the only tale to grace the stage. True to its title, “LOVE/SICK” followed a varied cast of characters as they navigated the ups and downs of love’s tumultuous journey. Audience member Ella Zalot ‘27 remarked, “I loved the way that the stories felt so unique and personal as I was watching them. The way the whole story came together at the end was unexpected but satisfying.”

Nola Thompson ‘27 added, “This play has an undeniably unique authenticity while also allowing the audience to relate to the conversations and experiences that the characters have in the individual vignettes.”

Giving insight into the directing process of the show, Director Becca Millevoi ‘24 shares, “I gave my actors a lot of autonomy in this process. I provided structure, tone and blocking but I really wanted them to be able to bring themselves into the acting. I find the best acting I see comes from people who incorporate their own circumstances into the work and so, I wanted to implement that foundation into this piece as much as possible.” She emphasizes, “I could not be more thankful to my cast and creative team for making



The cast of “Antigone” performs a movement piece.

this production something really special.”

The third show is “The Trail to Oregon,” which is a StarKid musical based on an old video game “The Oregon Trail” and in Muhlenberg’s rendition, it was directed by Nicholas Pierron ‘24. The show follows a family of five as they try hilariously to make it to Oregon in 1848. A notable and fan-favorite aspect of the show is when it becomes interactive with the audience. Julian Torres ‘25 said, “I think the improvisational aspect of it is really funny. That’s what I really enjoyed.”

Due to the interactive portions of the show, the names of the family members were determined by the audience, adding to the comedic entertainment. Cast members would look to the audience for suggestions and come close to the first row as the audience would erupt in yell-

ing, shouting for their option to be picked. Both daughters were named by the audience in the second show “Team Edward” and “Team Jacob” while the father was named after a character in “The Lorax,” “Once-ler.” All three shows had different names, based on whatever was chosen from the audience.

Towards the end of the show during its second night, the last song had the music cut out, but the cast members fended off this worry by singing the rest of the song and a capella-ing the rest. This added to the comedic element of the show and ended the show’s run on a high note because although it didn’t end as planned, it elicited laughter from the audience that was the loudest of the night— which says a lot because the whole night was filled with it.

Advocating for scholar G.N. Saibaba

By SHINAM HUSSAIN
ARTS AND CULTURE EDITOR

G.N. Saibaba was formerly an English professor at a University in Delhi, India. Saibaba was imprisoned under India’s Unlawful Activities Prevention Act for the past ten years. This act utilizes vague language to police and censor people in India who speak or advocate against governmental practices and deems them as terroristic.

Saibaba was incarcerated under this act. As well as being a professor, Saibaba was heavily involved in his community, serving as a minority community activist and advocating for the rights of under-represented communities in India. Knowing this as well as his influence as a professor, the Indian government imprisoned him for ten years. It is important to note that there was no tangible evidence against Saibaba; his imprisonment was largely based on assumptions by the Indian government.

Saibaba is 90 percent disabled, suffering from various health conditions that worsened from his time in prison, where he was repeatedly denied proper

medical care. Saibaba spent his time in prison writing and expressing his feelings through his art. Saibaba spent time writing letters and poems where he expressed his desire to not only be released from prison but to also return back to the classroom, doing what he loves.

As of early March of this year, Saibaba has been acquitted, however, the threat of rearrest is still imminent. As Saibaba spends time recuperating and focusing on his health, he and his close confidants have expressed the importance of spreading awareness of his imprisonment and the conditions that allowed him to be incarcerated in the first place.

Saibaba is only one example of a variety of academics and scholars that have become imprisoned, and face the threat of imprisonment or termination of their jobs in academia. Scholars at Risk (SAR), an international network that works with universities, focuses on the advocacy of academics across the world that have been censored and punished for their activist efforts. Muhlenberg is partnered with SAR; having students come together to advocate for various

scholars. On Apr. 15, there will be students tabling and orchestrating events corresponding to their respective scholars, advocating for their release from prison.

To properly honor and advocate for Saibaba, here is an excerpt of one of his poems written from when he was incarcerated, titled “A Letter to Dear Students and My Fellow Teachers” where he writes about and expresses his genuine desire to be back in the classroom through the art form he was most familiar with: writing.

I dream of being in my classroom
day and night fettered behind
the strong iron beams
of my tiny solitary prison cell.

I see you, talk to you
and hug you by the force
of my frail and challenged life
in my unchained mind’s eye
as the desire for freedom
flows through the sinews
and veins of my bloodstream
even as I am caged
far away from you.

Teaching is my forte,
breath and life, you know
I embraced literature

for it clasps us with our troubled histories,
philosophies and economics
of pangs of pain, tears,
fears and hopes
for a bright new day.



BergImmersive creates a new theatrical space on campus

BY MEGAN HANSEN
CAMPUS VOICES EDITOR

Amongst some social and online discourse about the casting opportunities, or even lack thereof, afforded by the structure of the Muhlenberg theatre community, a group of passionate students took the initiative to form a new organization, BergImmersive. Last semester, they made their debut with an adaptation of “A Midsummer’s Night’s Dream” titled “Love and Idleness.” The production and the organization as a whole were widely well-received by the campus. In addition to providing more creative opportunities in the fields of acting, directing, devising, crew, management and more, the club offered students the chance to break away from traditional styles of theatre more commonly practiced here at Muhlenberg and explore a completely new avenue of the art: immersive theatre.

“I believe that immersive theatre is anything that is non-traditional in the sense that I highly doubt that we will ever be setting up a clear separation between the audience and the stage,” said current Co-President Maya Handler ‘27. “There is no concrete definition, but what we need to do is blur a line. We create new theatre from a mold we have already been given with an emphasis on submersion and involvement. It can be done in

so many interesting and different ways.”

The club was co-founded by Emma Walter ‘24 and Gianna Carnevaliano ‘23. The two were abroad in London last spring when they saw a production of “The Burnt City,” an immersive theatre experience produced by a company known as Punchdrunk. From there, they both had artistic epiphanies that struck as an inspiration from the show as well as other ideas that had already been circling in their heads: they wanted to produce an immersive adaptation of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream.” From there, both took a course taught by Beatrice Bradley, Ph.D., called Shakespeare Reproduced, which provided foundational theory for adapting the script. They also reached out to former Muhlenberg faculty member Nigel Semaj, who had directed a queer adaptation of “Romeo and Juliet” in the fall of 2021 called “Call Me by Any Other Name... Just As Sweet.” With this help and through extensive research on modern fraternity life, masculinity, drugs, dreamscapes, psychology, queer theory, anti-racist theory and analysis of the text itself, “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” became “Love and Idleness,” a piece about consent and autonomy on college campuses.

“Our mission of our club is to provide additional supplemental opportunities,” said Wal-

ter. “There are tons of theatre majors on this campus, myself included, who have had a hard time breaking into organizations. This is not to say that these organizations are at fault, but there are just merely so many people they are trying to service because our school is so theatre-heavy. Through this opportunity, Gianna and I initially wanted to create more opportunities for people to just have a chance to do theatre.”

As more people became involved during the production process and joined the cast, the club received calls for more. They even received an outpouring of audience and community support that encouraged them to keep producing. The club is now co-ran by Walter and Handler. However, putting on these productions has not been easy. There were significant challenges that came with navigating how to put up independent theatre at Muhlenberg. They went through multiple different options in terms of spaces to convert. Moyer, where “Love and Idleness” was performed, was not the first choice. With an unconventional space and a set made out of bottle caps, the final product was astoundingly beautiful. “There’s something to be said about how not everyone was rooting for us,” says Handler. “We were the underdog of the fall semester. But our community came together and said ‘This show will

happen.’” The persistence exhibited by the students seemed to be rooted in their pure desire to create.

Walter adds, “At first I felt like I would be doing things by myself. But the reason our club happened was because of our community. It was because of not only the people in the cast and crew –who were so instrumental, patient, and generous with their time – but those who were passionate about what we were doing.”

Now with an established community, the club has had a fairly smooth time communicating with the school during the process for “12 Ophelias,” a complex story about Ophelia from “Hamlet” breaking out of a purgatorial cycle of abuse that takes place in neo-Elizabethan Appalachia. With the continuation of the club, they would like to expand their auditioning pool and reach more people across campus, and let people know that they are legitimate and here to stay. “I believe that what we are doing is hot and new, and exciting for the campus,” said Handler.

“Especially for the underclassmen,” Walter adds, “It gets so many people into theatre troupe communities that they can then rely on. The connections that we’ve built in the past semester alone just through BergImmersive have been fabulous. Plus, to provide opportunity for crew people has been so import-

ant because designing in a converted setting is so different. Everyone should be able to learn something new and different and we want people to know. It’s exciting to give these new opportunities to our community.”

BergImmersive plans to keep exploring varying approaches to the new style they have introduced to Muhlenberg. With talks of new plans for the upcoming school year, they are constantly discovering new ways to involve more people and keep learning.

“The fact that we are pushing the boundaries of what theatre is so exciting and I think that can be reflected in how people reacted to our debut last semester. The fact that we were able to have this impact on our community shows the power of immersive theatre. I hope that through seeing our productions and getting involved that we are able to expand the boundaries of what theatre is and give people new opportunities to explore, find themselves, and learn more about the world.”

To show your support, “12 Ophelias” runs Apr. 11-13. Tickets are currently sold out. Visit @bergimmersive on Instagram for more information.



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A great day for insufferable people (me)

By Emily Nally
Assistant Campus Voices Editor

On Friday, Apr. 5, an amazing piece of music was dropped, and no, I’m not talking about Jojo Si-wa’s “Karma” music video. No, this is actually good. Annoying people all across the world are cheering and jumping for joy, and you should too, for the new album out by Lizzy McAlpine titled “Older.” A mature and beautiful work of art, “Older” takes the listeners through the breakdown of a relationship of McAlpine’s, slipping away from the experimental aspect of her previous album, “Five Seconds Flat.” So of course, here’s my breakdown of the album, and why you need to listen to it. Im-mediately.

We start off with the song “El-evator,” a short and slow open-ing to the album. “Can we stay like this forever?” McAlpine asks, hoping that this new begin-nig will stay perfect no matter what. “Come Down Soon” fol-lows next, where we listen to McAlpine talking to this new, exciting person, yet trying to remind herself that this elated feeling she has will not last for-ever. “Nothing this good ever lasts this long for me,” she says as the chorus begins, and contin-ues with, “Nothing this good’s ever really good for me.” Okay, ouch? This is a song all over-thinkers can relate to, self-sabo-taging anything good they have.

Moving on, we have “Like It Tends To Do.” An intimate song to the listener with McAlpine’s voice shining through light gui-tar, we are taken through the moments when you meet the person you’ve broken up with

and now don’t know how to act around them. Are you friends? Acquaintances? Nothing at all? Everything feels awkward de-spite the fact that you know everything about this person. McAlpine writes, “Would every-thing have changed/Like it tends to do?” I did not need to hear such a real lyric, thanks, queen! After this, we get “Movie Star,” which depicts McAlpine loving the feeling of being wanted, even by someone who constantly tears her down and hurts her. “I feel like a movie star, but it’s get-ting old/Being famous for some-one,” she sings.

Now we reach a personal fa-vorite of the album titled “All Falls Down.”As soon as the song begins, you get an amazing blend of what appears to be flute, clar-inet, saxophone and perhaps more. As a flute player myself, hearing instruments that I play in a way you normally would not find them is so amazing, and McAlpine perfectly executes this addition of instruments. If you like “Sling,” from Clairo, you will adore this song. I shouldn’t want to dance to the sad lyrics, but the instruments make it feel so warm and inviting, perhaps done on purpose to represent the re-lationship. The lyrics express anxiety and distrust as McAlpine sings, “Am I that good of a liar/ That I believe myself again?” Ex-cuse me? Way too real Lizzy, way too real. I will be ignoring the lyrics and dancing on, so sorry.

We progress to “Staying,” which is simply heartbreaking and bare as McAlpine describes the feeling of struggling to leave her toxic relationship despite knowing she has to. “Maybe I will someday/Let this go forev-er.” We now hit the middle point



Lizzy McAlpine’s album “Older” features 14 new songs.

of the album with a previously released song called “I Guess.” Taking someone home for the night in an attempt to get over someone else, McAlpine writes lyrics like, “I guess it’s all about trying/To love someone you’ve never met,” which leaves the lis-tener heartbroken.

“Drunk, Running” comes next, and this one is another favorite of mine. We start off with McAlpine describing telling the person in the relationship to stay sober like they said they would. Just when you think that is completely gut-wrenching on its own, the second verse copies a similar lyrical structure, except McAlpine writes, “No one stops me/Nobody takes you from my hand,” meaning no one helps keep her sober from this person. Hello? Literally devastating. My jaw dropped when I first heard this.

As the album and story move forward, we reach “Broken Glass,” where McAlpine depicts hurting someone emotionally as if it were physical harm. There is definitely a mood change in the album, where we see anger and

darkness come from McAlpine not only through lyrics, but in-strumentals as well. “It might seem like I love you/But I just don’t want to be alone” she sings at the climax of the bridge.“You Forced Me To” takes on a similar mood of eeriness, as McAlpine sings, “I have changed/Because you forced me to.”

The title track“Older” follows up, as McAlpine sings a song true to all of my nostalgia lovers who just cannot bear the fact that they are growing older and leav-ing their childhood behind, all while feeling not ready enough for adulthood. “Mom’s getting older/I’m wanting it back.” This lyric speaks for itself, and hurts way too much. “Better Than This,” the third to last song, reaches a point where McAlpine reflects and notes her fear of not being the person she thinks she’s perceived as, and realizes she must leave her relationship for the better.

“March” takes on a bit of a dif-ferent storyline, where she pays tributes to her father, who died in March 2020. “So far away and then it hits you/Like it was yes-

terday,” she describes the grief of her losing her dad, a feeling that anyone who has lost some-one can easily relate to and un-derstand. We reach the end of the album with the song “Vor-tex,” which feels like the perfect goodbye to the album and the re-lationship. Two lines really stuck out to me, those being, “And it never lasts long/Cause I always come back when I need a new song” and “Someday you’ll come back and I’ll say no.” Ouch? De-vious lines, absolutely devious Lizzy.

If all of this hasn’t convinced you to go listen to Lizzy McAlpine’s new album, I’m tru-ly disappointed. A wonderful representation of the emotions you’d never want to express out loud, McAlpine beautifully con-structs a bare and honest piece of work that almost every person can relate to in some regard. So go listen...or else.

Summary Judgment

Dedicated to Edward Gorey

By Illan Hass
Staff Writer

The gerbils are screaming. “Dis-pense with the pleasantries! You carrot-munching —!”... you shut the door, smear lotion on the handle, and tiptoe down the fire escape. A team of ground-hogs furtively rappel down from the third story window of Trader Joes, tying half-cooked ramen noodles to extend the rope as they go, hoping to avoid the gaggle of stir-crazy report-ers desperate for the arrival of spring. One story beneath, wearing a bucket to protect his head, the cashier stacks boxes and boxes of Old Spice deodor-ant to reach the leaky ceiling.

The other employees cut your “Happy Birthday” cake, but the table disappears. Top secret files about mango shortages and ge-netically modified explosive ki-wis spill from the drawers. Now the ramen is everywhere. In the sky, google tasks and worried texts from Josephine (who left the party early) descend ma-jestically on covered platters, carried by angels dressed in Mc-Donald’s uniforms. This is your conscience speaking... We have an announcement to make. But the closet won’t open. So five muscular women carry surf-boards down the hallway, blaring traditional Russian folk music. Pandemonium erupts: the prin-cipal begins shouting, the secu-rity guards break out slick dance moves. A responsible student

runs to close the window, while months pass in Senegal... Ignore the body odor. Gather under the yurt! “Weighing more than thirteen and a half elephants —”. Everybody tells you to stop talking. How about using a more inventive pick-up line the next time, the astronomer suggests. Your coworker cries out in des-peration: how can we finish this before Easter if they won’t pro-vide funding for swiveling desks and maternity leave?!? She stares at you and chomps into the grapefruit rind, breathing heav-ily. Your father is mortified. In the distance, tadpoles are being eaten. A queue of spinny chairs salute and roll off the cliff. Con-scripted lawyers bear witness be-hind mahogany desks while per-spiring under the Arizona sun,

preparing piles of death apology notes and dental records under the surveillance of Harry, the en-lightened X-ray machine turned fanatical government overseer. Indeed, circumstances con-spired against us... Too many left gloves. Too many closets. Not enough tampons. Your uncle’s neon pink carriage rumbles over the cobblestones, horses rearing as he shouts rudely at the honk-ing caravan of cement trucks: fi-nally, home! But old cookbooks and your dad’s unfinished PhD fall off the shelves as the floor collapses, a sinkhole swallowing your wife of twenty years and half your carpeted basement and your antique coal-burning fur-nace. Your cat’s inability to com-prehend the disaster prompts you to abandon your dreams

of Hollywood, so you call your ex-sugar daddy from your years in Sicily. He doesn’t understand. Magazines all feature your shocking actions leading to the collapse of the family business. Flocks of CDs barrel down the alley, fleeing the recycling wom-en in green overalls. The presi-dent calls, but the justice depart-ment is busy hosting a barbeque. Unannounced, the oddly assort-ed cantaloupes gallop across the savanna, their potted-plant riders flailing their tendrils. The head justice says nothing. Your ex in a black speedo moonwalks down the crosswalk. Birds stare judgmentally. You forgot to lock the door. The interview ends.

“Fixer to Fabulous:” let’s fix it, please!

By JOHNNY VEGLIA
MANAGING EDITOR

Over spring break, Easter break and my time missing in action, I had the pleasure of watching HGTV. The Home & Garden Television programs would help fill the time when visiting my Grandma and as I was yearning for something with a little more spice than a talk show. I enjoyed watching these programs, which feature couples and other individuals joining together to beautify the homes of various families. It was also nice when my Grandma would join in for a couple of episodes and it would be a calming afternoon.

However, as it went from one program to another, I realized that all of these houses looked the same. There was the rare opportunity where a singular space in the house would have some personality, such as a bar in a couple’s home that featured artifacts and other trinkets from their travels abroad. It was a really fun room, but it was the exception, not the norm. From “Fixer to Fabulous” to “Home Town,” the two shows that dominated my HGTV afternoons, the houses looked the same—extremely clean with color reserved as a splash to add some character. The real highlights would be the furniture pieces, such as custom kitchenware and things of significance, that helped to bring some personality and warmth to the space. One of the few elements to add personality was a watercolor painting of the house. It reminded me of a larger issue: the commerciality of blandness.

In our capitalist society, and

with the current craziness of the housing market, blandness sells. It’s clean, it’s safe and it gives people a sense of belonging while not overwhelming them. This is not to say the designers and other individuals behind these projects are bland, but they have to play by the rules of the current market. This can also be seen with our current hotel and hospitality industry, as major companies, even Disney, move towards neutral colors and simple flooring to make spaces feel cleaner. It’s discouraging that all of these hotels in various locations are now hard to differentiate between when comparing photos.

Those who are lucky enough to own a home are greeted with a space that they can exist in, rather than a space that inspires them and allows for expression in unique and fundamental ways. People should not just have to rely on a singular furniture piece to have a moment of inspiration and character. As a maximalist, I yearn for a space to tell a story, to feel alive, utilizing whatever elements we may have, including postcards, LED strip lights, print photos and more.

Another show I watched during the same timeframe was the “Barbie Dreamhouse Challenge,” a competitive show that highlighted couples from both HGTV and the Food Network as they ultimately designed the Barbie Dreamhouse. It was quite a fun show and had great corporate synergy, as it premiered this past summer, just in time for “Barbie” (2023). The designers created beautiful spaces and while I do have some problems

with the show, such as the division of spaces within the house, I thoroughly enjoyed the explosion of color and design choices throughout the house.

Now I am not saying that we have to be as extravagant as Barbie, but we do not have to be trapped in the same commerciality depicted in the regular HGTV programming. Rebecca Robeson is one of my favorite interior designers as she navigates both of these levels in a fun and dynamic way. My favorite videos of hers are her Christmas displays, which she starts setting up in October. Robeson’s designs are relative to current trends, but she also varies her design styles to match her clients and the overall vibes of her different projects. It is a pleasure to watch her YouTube channel, beyond just the holiday season, and to see how much she cares for each project and has a beautiful blend of being clean while letting her personality run wild.

While this is definitely not the most pressing issue in the housing industry, especially with the rise of unhoused individuals, the fluctuation of Airbnb and inflation in the market, it highlights how the owners of these properties should not feel confined by the current trends. Do we want a house with neutral colors and a couple paintings just because other people have the same? Or do we want to create a home that highlights our voice? Let’s not allow capitalism to dictate what our spaces look like by granting pops of personality and color to take full control.



- Aries**
The stars see a lot of Dr. Pepper in your future. You lucky duck.
- Taurus**
You tend to shut yourself off from others before you can make meaningful connections. Keep it up! Socializing is hard work.
- Gemini**
You should watch Robin Williams’s 1998 classic “Patch Adams” about 47 times within the next month. The stars say you will discover the meaning of life.
- Cancer**
You planned something for Tuesday. Don’t do it. Whatever it is, it’ll end with you being forced to listen to “Wonderwall” while riding a unicycle.
- Leo**
Uh oh! There are many badgers coming your way! Better get out of here and make it to your nearest badger-free location.
- Virgo**
Be careful walking around campus in the near future. Your evil twin from the dark dimension has been eating bananas and leaving the peels around for you to slip on.
- Libra**

- You will find yourself walking to class in a couple of days, when a man will stop you on the street and ask you for a dollar. Give it to him, for that man will turn out to be Jimmy Carter!
- Scorpio**
The stars say that you should stop building houses out of straw and sticks. It’s freaking everyone out. Just use bricks like a normal person.
- Sagittarius**
You will be getting a little creature soon! A small lizard or monkey will find you soon and latch onto you as your buddy! Make him do all your bidding.
- Capricorn**
FOLD. YOUR. LAUNDRY. It’s been sitting in the corner of your room for almost two weeks. Thisweeks this is getting ridiculous. Fold it!
- Aquarius**
You slayed and girlboss-ed a little too hard this week. Allocate some time to power naps this week as you regain your true power.
- Pisces**
It’s your time to shine! Make yourself known! Start a podcast!

PHOTO FROM HGTV.COM.



The cast of “Fixer to Fabulous.”

Women’s lacrosse takes annual trip

By ELISABETH LOISELLE
STAFF WRITER

Over the ten-day spring break, the Muhlenberg women’s lacrosse team went 2-0 during their annual spring break training trip to Hilton Head Island, S.C. The Mule’s 19-5 win over Wheaton College and 24-12 win over Kean University have pushed the team’s overall record to 6-0* for the third consecutive season.

The women’s lacrosse yearly trip to Hilton Head Island is an over-decade-long spring break tradition that has proven to be more than just a customary part of the team’s in-season training. The six-day visit continues

to serve as a pivotal bonding opportunity for the team, with ample free time to spend with teammates and enjoy the nice weather. Meaghan Haughney ‘25 eloquently captures the experience by saying, “I think the Hilton Head trip is amazing solely because of the amount of team bonding we get to have while we’re there. It’s a designated 6 days to spend with just our teammates so we really get to know each other outside of lacrosse which translates to our team connection on the field.” First-year players alike deemed the experience impactful for their integration into the program and overall chemistry with the entire team. Alyssa Hartnett

‘27 says, “The team Hilton Head trip was a great way for us to get to know our teammates better and grow our team camaraderie. It was so fun to get to play lacrosse all week and hang out on the beach with my team.”

The team’s bonding was facilitated in a multitude of ways, from daily trips to the beach, nightly ice cream excursions, and much-favored alligator sightings. Captain Emily Vaughn ‘25 recalls her most notable memory of the trip as “when we had [a] team dinner at the Kushel’s house. We had an amazing meal, played cornhole, went to the beach and had smores. Families were also invited so it was a great time to meet the new

members’ parents, grandparents, and siblings.”

The 2024 Hilton Head Island trip was also record-setting for this year’s team. The game against Kean allowed the Mules to tie a 37-year standing record with the team’s 24 goals. The 24-goal milestone was first reached in 1987 and has only been matched one other time in 2003. The 2024 squad now has two of the top five single-game goal marks in program history.

The team believes the undeniable bonds the Hilton Head Island trip fostered have paved the way for a powerful momentum going into the remainder of the season and will make the team even more successful than their

record already demonstrates. “Spending spring break together as a team at Hilton Head allowed us to get to know each other on an even deeper level. I think that our team has developed a kind of sisterhood. We all care about each other. The experiences that we have off the field translate to more trust and teamwork on the field. I am excited as we begin our Centennial Conference schedule. We have a great group of women on this lacrosse team and have a real opportunity to do special things,” says Captain Nicole Steiner ‘24.

The Mules will next take on Dickinson University on Sat, Apr. 13 on Varsity Field.

*Current record 9-2



Women’s lacrosse visits the beach at Hilton Head.

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PRESENTS

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Muhlenberg’s golf team in South Carolina over spring break.

Mules golf storms South Carolina

By HENRY STOER
ROOKIE WRITER

For the 2024 spring break, the Muhlenberg golf team spent much of their time down in the warm and sunny clutches of Myrtle Beach, S.C. This marked the second year in a row that the golf team went down to play in Myrtle Beach, though the initial plans for next year seem to indicate that the destination will be elsewhere. As for Myrtle Beach, the team enjoyed an action-packed five days full of golf, team bonding, and various activities in the warm southern climate.

The trip started off bright and early as the team packed into two vans at 6 a.m. on the Saturday of spring break, before trying to get as much sleep as possible during the 10-hour drive from Allentown to Myrtle Beach. Once there, the team moved into

their temporary home, which had been recently renovated to look like it should be on the set of the next Barbie movie. Golf would not start until the next day, though the team did hit the local grocery store to load up on food for the stay.

On Sunday, the team’s first round took place at the Man O’ War Golf Course on a very windy afternoon. The course was fairly tough and had a lot of water hazards, though the wind proved to be the most difficult factor. The team, along with their coaches, engaged in plenty of spirited competitions amongst each other during the round, which helped to bring out the competitiveness of the athletes. “I’m looking forward to beating the coaches again next year,” said Alex McCauley ‘26.

The team ate dinner together every night, usually at the pink, Barbie-style house, and Sunday

was no exception. The team also got to watch both the 96th Academy Awards that night, as well as an NBA game between the Philadelphia 76ers and New York Knicks. Said game proved to be a competitive watch, as the Muhlenberg golf team plays host to multiple “Sixers” and Knicks fans, all of whom are passionate about their favorite sports teams.

Both Monday and Tuesday consisted of early morning tee times for rounds, allowing for more time in the afternoon to do other things. For the former, the team traveled to the Grande Dunes Resort Club to play a very beautiful, yet tough course. Like before, the team split off into groups and had matches amongst themselves. After the round, a few members stayed behind to play another 18 holes at the resort club, this time from the tees furthest back, which

was played at over 7,500 yards. For reference, the tees everyone played in the earlier round were about 6,700 yards.

As for Tuesday, the team played at Arrowhead Country Club, which was familiar ground to some, as it was the first course the team had played during the previous spring break trip in 2023. The course was tough, largely due to the narrow tee shots and vast amounts of trees. This did not discourage the team, as they played hard and even found the time to make a few TikToks for the official Mules Golf TikTok page.

After their final round, the team dined out at a local seafood buffet restaurant called Benjamins. Then, they traveled to Pop Stroke, a mini golf experience designed by the legendary golfer, Tiger Woods. While mini-golf might not be accurate to what one might see on the regular golf

course, it still provided the team with a good amount of putting practice on difficult terrain and some more friendly competition.

Overall, the trip proved to be a lot of fun for the golfers involved and a good way to get them prepared for the upcoming spring season. “It was a good team bonding experience,” said Aron Gianchandani ‘24. “I feel like we’ve grown a lot as a team.” Team growth is certainly a key for the Muhlenberg golf team, as they transition into the grind for the conference tournament. With an influx of new talent on both the men’s and women’s side joining the team from other Muhlenberg sports following the end of spring break, the bolstered Mules golf roster looks ahead to what should be a bright future.

Softball stands strong: extra-innings

By LEXI SIPOS
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

The Muhlenberg softball team had a busy weekend with games against Washington College and Dickinson. Unfortunately, the Mules lost a doubleheader on Saturday against Washington College. Then, in the match against Dickinson, the players went into extra-innings in both games. Although the Mules lost 5-6 in the first game against Dickinson, they came back with a score of 6-5 securing the win for the last game.

As the team members reflected on their weekend full of play, Sophia Cicchetti ‘24, commented, “We played a doubleheader versus Dickinson this past weekend, and both games ended in extra-innings. This shows how motivated and hardworking our team is to succeed. We stayed determined and gave it our all until the very end of every game because it takes every single one of us to win a game.” In addition to the team’s motivation, Skylar Campisi ‘27 had similar observations and talked about things they can improve on. “During

the game, we did a great job of keeping our energy up and supporting each other on and off the field. In the future, we are prioritizing making adjustments earlier on in the game to keep a strong defense and efficient offense.”

Nonetheless, the Mules were prepared for extra innings against Dickinson. Dara DiMaio ‘24 said, “We practice a lot of extra innings at practice, including International Tie Breaker both defensively and offensively. Going into extra innings, if anything, excites our team more because the game becomes more intense as it goes. When amazing things happen in this setting, it becomes even more exciting because things are at such a high-stake. This is not to say that there are no nerves during extra innings because of course there are, but we pride ourselves on being exciting during games which definitely helps those nerves subside.”

It is challenging going into extra innings in their first game against Dickinson and while keeping in mind they will be playing another whole game. To add to their mental fortitude, the

Mules went into extra-innings in the second Dickinson game too. Their mental toughness and strength allowed them to succeed and end the game with a win. Cicchetti added, “I thought our team’s mindset at the end of the extra inning was great. We knew we could fight, so we kept our heads up. We fought until the very end. Other teams could have given up in the seventh inning, but we were determined to win, and our two trips into extra innings showed our determination and willingness to fight.”

With a similar mindset, DiMaio recognized the team’s mentality and ability to take a setback and transform it into a comeback. “Obviously, after losing after ten innings, no one is going to be happy. Although, there is no time to be sad or mad because we had to play game two just a short 20 minutes later. I think, if anything, losing after ten innings just fired us up more to come back in game two and beat them. It was still a hard eight-inning-battle, but we quickly changed an angry attitude into a determined one.”

In looking towards the future of this team, it was monumental

that the Mules won a conference game against Dickinson. DiMaio explains how these wins influence their future standing. “Every game we play influences the team and the foreseeable future. Conference games, like the extra-inning Dickinson games, are extremely important. In order to make the Centennial Conference (CC) playoffs, we need to be placed in the top five, so we need to win as many conference games as possible heading into playoffs. Obviously, the goals after we play those games is to win CC’s and head into regionals, etc. As we are in the middle of our season and conference play, we really have been focusing on positivity and excitement, in games and in practice.” The Mules have a clear strategy in moving forward toward playoffs.

Ultimately, the Mules ended on a positive, strong finish to their weekend full of play. This performance shows their grit in the face of adversity and how they respond to challenges. In considering their mindset in the preseason until now, the players have not wavered in their goals. Campisi said, “During the preseason a large portion of our

team said that our goal was winning the conference and making it to Texas for the national championship. Our goal has not changed at all. While we are focused on each game, our overarching goal is serving as a motivator for us as we are at the height of our season.”

The team’s goals also align with individual goals focused on positivity. Cicchetti said, “My preseason goal is to always have fun on the field and that definitely won’t change. It is my last season and I want to give it my all and just have fun out there playing one last time with my teammates.” Overall, the Mules persevered through their extra-innings, remained confident in their abilities and all shared the same objectives for the future.

To see the Mules back in action, their next game is on Saturday, Apr. 13, at 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. at Gettysburg College.

THE MUHLENBERG

WEEKLY / SPORTS

Mules dominate on home turf in strong win over McDaniel College

By MARC SCHERER
ROOKIE WRITER

After a strong performance against Washington College in their last game, the Muhlenberg men's lacrosse team followed up that effort with another dominant win against McDaniel College this past Saturday evening at Scotty Wood Stadium. During a commanding 17-6 victory, the Mules saw contributions from the entire roster. Jack Bill '27 led the team with six goals and eight total points in a performance that came only one point short of tying the school record for most points in a game. Wyatt Malia '24 also had a strong game with two goals and a career-high four assists as he finished the game with seven shots on goal.

While the team's offense came through in a big way, the Mules also played well defensively throughout all four quarters. Muhlenberg held the Green Terror to a total of six goals, limiting McDaniel to no more than two goals per quarter. Muhlenberg's strong defensive play prevented McDaniel from scoring an even-strength goal in their set offense for the majority of the game. A strong performance in faceoffs and ground balls also contributed towards Muhlenberg's victory. Muhlenberg held the edge in these two categories winning 23 of 27 faceoffs and 37 of 55 ground balls. With the victory, the Mules moved to 2-2 in the Centennial Conference and 5-7 on the season.



Ryan Neal '27 defends a Muhlenberg possession against McDaniel on April 6.

As a result of the team's strong performance, there were a lot of positive takeaways that

came from the team's play. After the game, Head Coach Jake Plunket commented on the play of the team by saying, "I was very pleased with the performance on Saturday night at home. It was great to see such a dominant performance at the defensive end, at the face-off dot, and on the offensive end as well. With fifteen of the seventeen goals being assisted, I couldn't have been more happy with how we moved the ball efficiently and looked to make the unselfish pass for better opportunities."

He also discussed the future of the team in their matchups this season. "The great thing about lacrosse in the Centennial Conference is that all teams are extremely competitive and many teams are nationally ranked in the top twenty of Division III. Every conference game has a huge impact on the Centennial Conference Playoffs and playing for a championship. With our next two games against Ursinus and Gettysburg, we are excited about the challenge and looking forward to competing in some big games on a national stage."

The team is looking to build upon their recent success and continue to climb up the standings. With almost all of the remainder of their games against

teams in the Centennial Conference, the Mules understand the importance of the games ahead. Chase Kusko '27 went on to explain the team's mindset looking ahead to the remainder of the season. "Every single team that we have to play is going to be a very competitive matchup for us. We just have to take things one game at a time and control what we can control." Kusko elaborated, "We're just gonna continue working on fundamentals and the little things that we can control. We'll also work on team concepts specific to the team we are playing next."

The Mules continue their season with a road game against Gettysburg on Apr. 13 as they look to earn a winning record within the Centennial Conference. Coming off their recent strong play, the men's lacrosse team returns home on Apr. 17 to play the first of three home games to finish the season.



PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY '27.

Wyatt Malia '24 converses with Andrew Hohegger '25.

Coming up this week in
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Apr. 11 - Apr 17.

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The Haas College Center houses the College's Office of Financial Aid.

Another year, another tuition increase

Rising tuition brings rising concerns

By AMY SWARTZ
NEWS EDITOR

“It was unmanageable before, now it’s just comical.” One anonymous student gave their candid thoughts on the most recent raise in tuition. As Muhlenberg students head towards the upcoming school year, with more rules already in place regarding all students having to live on campus all four years, the absolute last thing students want to see is an email in their inbox explaining a tuition increase.

Yet, on Feb. 29, 2024, all non-graduating students at Muhlenberg received an email outlining yet another tuition increase for the 2024-2025 academic year. The tuition increase from 2022-2023 was 3.9 percent and 2023-2024 was 3.85 percent. For this upcoming academic year, tuition and fees have been raised by 4.27 percent. This puts the cost of tuition and fees for 2024-2025 at \$77,353.

Julie Morrison ‘26, expressed her frustration with the increase. “I went here because it was the most affordable option,

and now they’re just raising tuition consistently. Plus, they’re getting rid of off-campus housing, so now we’re forced to pay for room and board, so we have to pay more anyway.”

There is not yet a significant amount of comparable data on tuition and fees for 2024-2025 colleges and universities. However, national averages from 2023-2024 can be examined. Muhlenberg’s tuition and fees, including housing, were raised to \$74,050 in the 2023-2024 academic year. Muhlenberg is considered to be a private, non-profit, four-year institution. The College Board announced the average costs of tuition and fees for various different types of higher institutions for 2023-2024. They found that a private nonprofit four-year’s average tuition and fees, including housing, were \$56,190. That’s a little over half of Muhlenberg’s 2023-2024 cost.

President Kathleen Harring, Ph.D., in collaboration with Vice President for Enrollment Management Meg Ryan and Chief Financial Officer Curt Topper, answered questions about the

newest tuition increase. They explained that “Muhlenberg’s cost tends to be lower than comparable institutions. We follow the costs of several other private institutions in areas with similar costs of living, and Muhlenberg has ranked at or near the bottom of that list every year. Additionally, our annual cost increases have been at or lower than the national average for non-profit four-year institutions. For example, according to the College Board, the 2023-2024 average cost increase for private, non-profit, four-year colleges over the previous year was 4.0 percent, whereas our cost increase that year was 3.65 percent.”

Though Muhlenberg’s percentage increase is consistently lower than the national average, the actual tuition rate is significantly higher than in similar institutions.

Muhlenberg awards 99 percent of its students with some sort of financial aid to offset the “sticker price” of a Muhlenberg education. This aid allows for the opportunities at Muhlenberg to be available to prospective

students who need financial assistance. While this 99 percent is fantastic, it is important to note how tuition increases impact financial aid and awards that are given to students. When asked if merit scholarships increase according to the percentage increase – this would mean a 4.27 percent increase for the 2024-2025 academic year – Harring, Ryan and Topper explained that “Merit scholarships do not change year over year. However, need-based aid may increase for those who are eligible for need-based aid. This ensures that our financial aid dollars are supporting students with the most financial need.” For students who rely on merit scholarships as a consistent form of aid, the scholarship value decreases year after year.

For instance, students in the Dana Scholars program are awarded an annual stipend of \$5,000. With the 4.27 percent tuition increase, this original scholarship depletes in value, making the actual value received feel like \$4,786.50. Any decrease in the value of a promised scholarship has the potential to be a

significant barrier for already committed, admitted and attending students at Muhlenberg who have no control over tuition increases and are already too far into their undergraduate education to consider alternative higher education options if the costs become exclusionary.

Alyssa Kaplan ‘25, expressed her concerns. “My merit scholarships when I first arrived at Muhlenberg felt promising, but they are beginning to feel more meaningless as the tuition keeps being raised.”

Harring, Ryan and Topper also detailed that “The College posts its breakdown of individual costs on the website.” Some of these fees are shocking, and often go unnoticed. Two jarring fees are a Student Teaching fee of \$417, and an orientation fee of \$210. Student teaching is mandatory for all students on the education track, and orientation is mandatory for all incoming first-year students, as well as students who transfer into Muhlenberg. It is clear that students have a

SEE **TUITION** PAGE 4

Arts & Culture

BergImmersive stages “12 Ophelias” in the Hoffman House.
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Campus Voices

Sarah Wedeking ‘24 shares the experiences of twins at Muhlenberg.
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THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY

Serving the Muhlenberg College Community since 1883

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The Muhlenberg Weekly strives for accuracy in reporting and writing, but we acknowledge that mistakes happen. Readers are invited to submit corrections about errors in articles, and they should be submitted to weeklyeditor@gmail.com. Corrections are also brought to our staff's attention by our own editors and writers. Our staff will review the suggested correction, consult with the author of the article, and issue the appropriate correction. Online corrections are located at the bottom of the article. Print corrections are located within the paper, on the page indicated in the online edition. However, The Weekly does not grant take-down requests for articles.

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CAMPUS SAFETY NOTES

4/10/24

Suspicious Person—Report of suspicious person in Baker, upon arrival, officer spoke to individual, no further incident.

4/11/24

Alarms—Report of fire alarm from steam from shower in Robertson Hall.

4/12/24

Noise complaint—Report of noise complaint at off-campus location, upon arrival, residents spoken to, no further incident.

Medical—Report of sick student in Walz Hall, MCEMS responded, AEMS responded and transported student to the hospital.

Harassment—Report of harassment in Seegers Union, investigation to continue.

4/13/24

Outside agency—Report of assault from outside agency, Campus Safety assisted, outside agency investigating.

Theft—Theft from fraternity house, item recovered, to be returned.

4/14/24

Alcohol violation—Report of underage possession of alcohol on Leh Street, referred to judicial advisor.

Suspicious activity—Report of burnt smell in Baker, upon arrival it was from stage lights.

Property damage—Report of vandalism at faculty housing, damage to window.

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Muhlenberg will be a voting location for the Pennsylvania Primary Election.

Why I vote: students reflect on the upcoming election

By MOLLY LEVINE
STAFF WRITER

Muhlenberg College is nationally recognized for being a politically aware and involved campus, with over 82.6 percent of students voting in the 2020 election. During the 2020 presidential election, Joe Biden won 59 percent of 18-29 year old voters, according to data from Pew Research Center. Now, in a recent poll from NPR and Marist College, 61 percent of young voters disapprove of Biden’s job performance, though many of them could still be voting for Biden this fall.

Sabrina Russo ‘26, who’s registered to vote in New Jersey, is exercising her right to vote because of concerns around “health care, bodily autonomy

and [the] climate crisis.” Russo is not alone in her opinions: in Muhlenberg College’s Institute of Public Opinion’s latest poll, 59 percent of Pennsylvanians were against further restrictions to abortion, and 31 percent view climate change as a crisis.

“The emotion I am going into this election with is fear and a smidgen of hope,” said Russo.

Seannie Cahill-Swenson ‘27, registered to vote in North Carolina, said, “I’m voting [because] everyone should and it’s my first time.”

The first-time voter expressed similar feelings to Russo, saying, “I’m excited and I’m scared about the future of our country if I and everyone else don’t do our part in electing sane, rational, caring, smart people.”

Charlotte McKay ‘24, who is

registered to vote in New York, said, “I will be voting in the 2024 election because I believe it’s my responsibility to exercise this right of mine. No matter the results, I can at least say I partook and used my power.”

Many young voters have reacted particularly strongly regarding the administration’s handling of the Israel-Hamas war and the crisis in Gaza. Muhlenberg’s campus, like many college campuses, has become a center for debate and protest both in favor and against the U.S. involvement with Israel.

The “uncommitted” movement first took off in Michigan during the state’s Democratic primary, in which over 100,000 voters, led by young Arab American organizers, chose not to vote for Biden in the Democratic

primary, instead opting to select “uncommitted,” in order to apply political pressure to the president to change his policies in the Middle East.

“I honestly was unsure at first if I wanted to vote because of the situation in Gaza right now and my feelings towards this current administration’s actions regarding it,” commented McKay, “but I know that not voting would ultimately be more harmful in the long run. I’m [not] feeling great about this election to be honest, but I know that voting is a right that so many people have fought to have and that it’s one of the fundamental rights of being an American and I would be remiss to neglect it.”

81 percent of Pennsylvanians describe the election as a source of stress for them. With a com-

bination of global issues and domestic concerns about increasing polarization, access to health care, and the economy, this yet again feels like “the most important election of our lives.”

McKay ended her thoughts with a reference to “The West Wing:” “I just always remember a quote from my favorite fictional president, Jed Bartlet, ‘Decisions are made by those who show up!’”

The Pennsylvania primary will be held on April 23, 2024. For more questions on the upcoming election refer to the @bergvotes Instagram.

Once a mule, always a mule

Seniors reflect on their time at Muhlenberg

By MATTHEW KLINGER
NEWS EDITOR

What defines the Muhlenberg experience? Some say it is the community. Others say it is the academics. Still more say that it is defined by the clubs or the professors. The list could go on. But how do the seniors define the Muhlenberg experience? The Weekly talked to a number of seniors to get their perspective on what their time at Muhlenberg was like.

Many seniors mentioned the small community, highlighting how it was their favorite part of their undergraduate experi-

ence. Evan Lipman ‘24 said “My favorite part was the sense of community, where you can walk around and see people you know. Muhlenberg just has a homey feeling.”

Kayla Hartman ‘24 shared a similar sentiment, saying, “I loved the social experience and all the people I have gotten to meet and friends I have made.” Another senior added to that, reflecting that “I like how with a small community you get to know a lot more people than you otherwise would be able to.”

In addition to making friends, others found the small community to be beneficial in other ways. Mayu Lee ‘24 shared that

“I think it’s having the people around me, especially the upper-classman when I was an under-classman. Having them to create a safe space for me helped me to explore myself and become a better version of myself.”

Others noted that the Muhlenberg community extended beyond just the students and that professors reflected the same close-knit community found among their peers. Arielle Touitou ‘24 shared that her favorite part of her Muhlenberg experience has been “The music department as a whole. Every class I have ever taken has been wonderful; the faculty are amazing.” She also liked how in

general, “the fact you can be interdisciplinary is a great aspect of Muhlenberg.”

While the Muhlenberg community was a favorite for seniors, some found the small community to be problematic at times. Noah Berger ‘24 commented that because of the size, “everyone knows your business.” Lipman added to that, saying, “Because of the size, you need to look around before shit-talking someone.”

Lee found that despite the small size, it can be easy to only be exposed to one group of people. She reflected that “it can be really easy to get caught in a clique or niche, and I think there

is a lack of overlap among certain groups. For example, athletes and theatre students do not often overlap. As someone who is an athlete and also does theatre, art and film, I was able to be a part of different groups on campus, but that is not something everyone is able to do.”

Talking to seniors, then, it seems that Muhlenberg’s small student body and close-knit community are what define the Muhlenberg experience. And while, like with all things, there are some drawbacks to it, a close and supportive community will remain a defining part of the Muhlenberg experience for years to come.



Computer Science Professor Proyash Podder, Ph.D., conducts a class in software engineering.

AI in the classroom

How is the College dealing with this new pedagogical element?

By KATHERINE CONLON
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

With the inception of ChatGPT in 2022, now, more than ever, students have been granted new ways to learn. ChatGPT is an online artificial intelligence (AI)-powered chatbot with the ability to transform education. AI software is able to provide students with nearly instant answers to questions, brainstorming ideas and even fully completed assignments. AI has the potential to completely alter higher education, providing potential benefits and drawbacks. On one hand, professors can utilize AI tools to revolutionize their scholarship and teaching methods. Conversely, AI is ripe to be used to violate the Academic Integrity Code, with many features allowing plagiarism to go undetected.

While other schools in the Lehigh Valley have publicly addressed the AI issue, Muhlenberg has yet to release its stance. Many institutions have drafted policies related to AI, one of which includes Moravian University in Bethlehem, Pa. They

have adopted a tiered policy, meaning that professors can incorporate one of four different strategies into their syllabi. According to a 69 News story on the policy, the tiers include “One: unless specifically told to use AI, it’s off limits. Two: use it as a supportive tool but do so ethically and responsibly. Professors would then dive into what that means. Three: have AI tutor you but not generate your work. Four: use AI freely, but acknowledge when you do so.”

Provost Laura Furge, Ph.D., noted that faculty are obligated to state their expectations in their syllabus. “It would make sense that that should include what your expectations are for AI use of AI as well,” Furge continued, “But we are just in the infancy of developing policy... That’s all I know about it at this point. I’ve asked them to do it.”

Currently, Muhlenberg faculty members have a variety of policies for AI use in their classrooms. “My policy is to work with students to understand the limitations, biases and risks of AI tools developed by corporations. My policy is to center

student voices in conversations about AI rather than begin from a position that assumes students are dishonest,” said Professor of Media & Communication and Dean of Digital Learning Lora Taub, Ph.D.

Ira Wolfe, adjunct professor in the organizational leadership and innovation and entrepreneurship programs outlined his policy, saying, “I don’t use it in class but I encourage students to use AI as a writing, research and creative assistant. With that, I caution students that cut-and-paste will not be tolerated. While AI can be used, personalization and critical assessment is always necessary.”

Whether or not faculty members should be held responsible for catching their students’ AI-use is a matter that garners a wide breadth of perspectives. Commenting on the use of AI detection programs, Furge said, “There are systems where you can feed papers into it and have it check for artificial intelligence. That is fraught with issues as well, because that paper that you’ve just put into the system now becomes part of its data-

base. And you have taken someone else’s intellectual property and taken it out of their hands in ways that you don’t have permission to do.”

“I do not accept the logics of EdTech surveillance capitalism and I refuse to approach technology from the standpoint that students are dishonest, cheaters and lazy,” said Taub.

Professor of Psychology Jeff Rudski, Ph.D., offered a different view, saying, “I do check for the ‘formulaic bothsiders’ writing produced by AI, and if I suspect it’s been used I’ll try a few prompts that might produce a similar paper. My hope is that by permitting its use (and stipulating how it can be used), I can avoid most instances of academic dishonesty.”

In regards to a potential campus-wide AI policy, faculty members were supportive of the idea but suggested some stipulations. “I think students have a right to know how their faculty and administration are deploying AI tools and that they have a right to non-consent to the use of their data in AI contexts. I think faculty have a right to know how

the administration is deploying AI and what partnerships and deals they are establishing or may establish with tech companies that profit from our data. Any policy should center student voice and agency and privacy and not turn students into free labor for training corporate AI language models,” said Taub.

“Yes, but there should be a great deal of latitude given to each professor,” said Rudski. “I see it as analogous to the ‘self-plagiarism’ policy...some of us are fine with some elements of that, like borrowing a paragraph here or there since it helps students see links across courses or disciplines, while some of us want students to create everything anew in every paper.”

Overall, the idea of a faculty-led policy was endorsed by Furge. “I would want for faculty to have the autonomy to state what their policies are. I think one of the things that would likely come out of our policy is that you have to state in your syllabus what your expectations are for [the] use of AI,” said Furge.

FROM TUITION PAGE 1

myriad of fees that are not considered in the “sticker price,” yet are mandatory based on class year or program of study.

Anna Holmwood ‘24, an English literature major, obtaining a teaching certification in 7th-12th grade English, shares her experience of having to pay for fieldwork. “Student teaching is around \$400 extra a semester. I am usually working from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., and then I’ll work from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. every night. Student teachers plan lessons, make slides and materials, create assessments and grade student work.” Students are paying extra to work in Lehigh Valley school districts, as a part

of their education track requirements.

In the original email explaining the increase in tuition and fees, multiple educational initiatives were mentioned as being a reason for the monetary increase. Harring stated, “We also are excited to share that we are investing in a range of exceptional new opportunities for our students. To augment our challenging, supportive academic and student life programs, we continue to create and enhance resources like our renovated Finance Lab and our mock pre-health application process to help students translate their academic achievements into successful post-collegiate endeavors.”

A music and religious studies double major, who wanted to stay anonymous, expressed their concerns. “I think that the renovated Finance Lab and mock pre-health application process are great resources that are being added to the school. However, I also think that resources that all students are helping to create should benefit all students. Because of my program of study, I will never be able to use these resources, yet it was clearly outlined that my tuition money is going towards their funding.”

When this discontent from students was mentioned to Harring, Ryan and Topper, explained “Tuition and fees fund a range of improvements every year that benefit every student. Recently

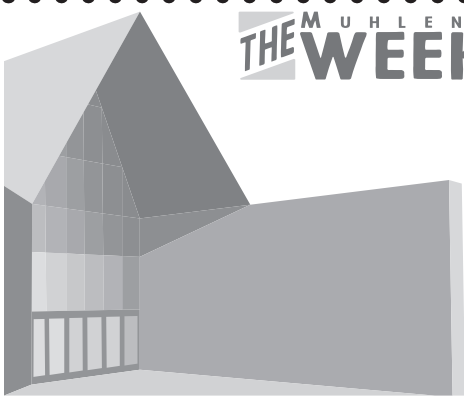
we have made significant investments in student-research resources, the career center, study abroad opportunities, instructional and research facilities and equipment, and funding for more experiential learning opportunities.”

Tuition is rising — rapidly. Are there any tangible solutions to ease this increase for students and their families? Or, can the student experience be amplified as an offset to these increases?

As of April 10, for students in the class of 2028, Muhlenberg has promised to never decrease their financial aid, although this statement is still unclear if it’s based on the percentage raise in tuition, or stays stagnant independent of any increase. In his

statement, Director of Financial Aid, Greg Mitton, sympathized with students and their families. “We share students’ and families’ frustrations and know how difficult making a final college decision can be if they are uncertain or confused about the actual financial commitment they are making.”

This uncertainty, confusion and frustration doesn’t seem to be contained to just the Class of 2028. Can measures be implemented for current Muhlenberg students? Or, will tuition keep increasing, with no guarantee of fixed financial support?



THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY

ARTS & CULTURE

“The most important aspect of freedom of speech is freedom to learn.”

- William O. Douglas

PHOTO BY CAROLINA SUTTON-SCHOTT '24.



BergImmersive staged “12 Ophelias” as an immersive theatre piece in the Hoffman House.

“12 Ophelias” transforms the Hoffman House

By EMMA HOWSON
STAFF WRITER

On April 11 at the Hoffman House, the new theatre organization on campus, BergImmersive, debuted its latest piece, “12 Ophelias,” written by Caridad Svich – who also wrote this fall’s departmental show “The Labyrinth of Desire” – and directed by Rozie Hoff ‘24.

Those who were on campus last semester will remember BergImmersive’s inaugural production entitled “Love in Idleness,” an adaptation of Shakespeare’s “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” which transformed the second and third floors of Moyer into a fraternity house. In that production, audience members were free to roam the space as they wished, and they were free to interact with the characters. This semester’s show is certainly different, though it was just as engaging and impactful. Alex Piteris ‘27, who played H in “12 Ophelias,” put it like this: “‘Love in Idleness’ was a phenomenal performance and, to be completely honest, will stay with me for the rest of my life. On the other hand, ‘12 Ophelias’ is not ‘Love in Idleness’ and it shouldn’t be. It has its own format, aesthetic and lessons.”

This show is very important to Hoff. “12 Ophelias’ has been a piece that I was originally exposed to [in] my sophomore

year, and I have since come back to time and time again,” she said. “I have looked at it through the lens of an actor, a Shakespeare enjoyer and an adapter. I [originally] wanted to direct this play this year as a capstone project for my undergraduate degree. On the other hand, I had such a great time being a part of ‘Love in Idleness’ last semester, and I knew I had to work BergImmersive into my spring somehow. Bringing ‘12 Ophelias’ to BergImmersive unlocked so many creative avenues I wouldn’t have even thought of in a more traditional format. It was truly a ‘trust the universe’ moment. I am so pleased with how everything worked out.”

Audiences were ushered into the Hoffman House through its back patio by R, played by Lacey Cataleta ‘26, and G, played by Sam Hoffman ‘27, the characters who guided people through the space. Aside from a prologue wherein the audience was invited to answer the prompt, “In a word, define Ophelia,” by writing on Noelle Simone’s ‘26 arms and legs with washable markers, the audience had no direct interaction with the characters... at least on a surface level. The play’s themes of sexuality, consent and violence forced one to question the morality of the audience’s mere presence, let alone their watching and witnessing of the story. This is the aim of im-

mersive theatre: to make the audience unendingly aware of their presence within the story and to ask what the effect of that presence is, whether the characters can see them or not.

“12 Ophelias” is a reimagining of “Hamlet” which asks what would happen if the character Ophelia, relegated usually to the role of a doomed damsel, emerged from her watery grave and fought to regain her agency.

The production process was rewarding for both cast and crew. Maya Handler ‘27, the assistant director and co-producer, said, “Being involved in this production was very rewarding from start to finish. Watching ‘12 Ophelias’ come together was nothing short of magical as our cast got comfortable both with each other and the text itself.”

James Goodwin ‘27, who played Rude Boy, also praised the process, saying it consisted of “...students coming together and using everything they had at their disposal to create a piece of art as a collective...It was a beautiful collaborative process that I hope more people get to experience in their lifetimes.”

The process was not without its challenges, though. The location of the performance was not known for a while, and this created puzzles that the creative team had to solve. Hoff said, “...I was unable to block the show until I knew what space our show

was going to take place in. In immersive theater the surrounding structure is the world.

Taking this time was required due to the heightened language of the script. “‘12 Ophelias’ isn’t traditional, but also isn’t fully Shakespearean,” Hoff continued. “It is highly stylized speech that has a lot of nuance and gray areas. So we were able to spend as much time as we needed answering any questions we had and specifying everything to our production.”

BergImmersive produced an impressive final product. Elliot Griffiths ‘27, who saw the show on opening night, said that it was “...easily the greatest play I’ve ever had the privilege to see.”

The collaborative nature of the show extended to the aftermath of rehearsals and performances. “One other thing I’ll say about the behind-the-scenes process was the setup and strike every day was an all-hands-on-deck situation,” Hoff stated. “All of the designers, producers and crew would work together to either set up or take down our world every day. One of our goals as an organization is to be immersive in the moment, obviously, but also as noninvasive and respectful as possible to the space that was lent to us.”

BergImmersive is only just getting started. Handler, who will be the president of the group next year, said, “BergImmersive

will continue to produce independent student theater! Following ‘Ophelias,’ our club will be working with its members to develop an equitable constitution. From there, we will begin the application process for our next production!”

Each member of the cast and crew hoped to pass on various messages to the audience. Said Handler, “I hope audiences will walk away feeling resolute and whole. The ending of ‘Ophelias’ is very emotional and inconclusive but peaceful in its ambiguity. Unlike most shows, the cast never takes a final, fourth-wall-breaking bow. The show simply ends, the actors leaving their characters behind where they stood.”

Hoff was more interested in creating a world and being inspiring: “I wanted to create a world that reflected the entire ensemble’s understanding and values that developed from the process. That being said, I hope fellow creatives walked away with ideas of their own of how they could break the mold, and of course never forget how badass female and AFAB [Assigned Female at Birth] creators are.”

Senior spotlight: Matt McCray ‘24

By JOHNNY VEGLIA
MANAGING EDITOR

Matt McCray ‘24 is an artist at Muhlenberg who continues to expand his interests and deepen his understanding of the performing arts on campus and beyond.

“I feel like I learned a lot. I challenged myself. Being a person of color already on campus could be a lot, but being a person of color within the arts can also be a challenge as well. So I know that I’ve done a lot of good work and hard work in order to get to the actor and human I am today.”

With a major in theatre and a minor in dance, McCray’s previous performance credits include both fields with involvements in multiple dance concerts and theatrical performances at Muhlenberg.

“I feel, dance-wise, doing these past two ‘In Motions’ was really grateful. The first-ever ‘In Motion’ [(2022)] I was a part of with choreographer Randall Anthony Smith [former assistant professor of dance] was very helpful,” said McCray. “The piece was called ‘R.A.I.N.B.O.W.’ and each letter represents something.... And I think that’s what really helped me to really dive deeper into dance because, before college, I was mainly a theatre kid. But coming to Muhlenberg, I was able to really get technical training dance-wise.”

McCray’s involvement with

“In Motion” would extend to this spring as well, with works featured by Anito Gavino, visiting assistant professor of dance, and Guest Artist Tommie Waheed Evans. McCray also had experiences with “Reset: New Dances” (2022, 2023) and continues to build his experiences with movement.

“We Are Proud to Present...” (2022) was McCray’s first in-person theatrical production at ‘Berg, after a Zoom performance during his first-year, and stood out for multiple reasons as it was “amazing.” McCray stated, “Shout out to Nigel [Semaj, former visiting assistant professor of theatre], they’re not here anymore, but they really helped me hone in on to my craft as an actor and then also as an activist and as a performer overall and how we have to tell stories of our history and all of our past in order to learn from our past and then grow for the future and what we want to have.”

This passion for theatre started at a young age when McCray was involved with a production of “The Little Mermaid.” This was the moment when McCray realized he wanted to be a performer for the rest of his life. “...[I] played Flounder, sang my song ‘She’s in Love’ and then at the end, I did a split. I had the whole crowd gagging. And the funny thing is the girl that played Ariel was mad at me, because I basically stole the show. After doing the show I told my-

self, ‘Yeah, I can do this for the rest of my life.’ I like to entertain people, that’s something that I’ve learned.”

While McCray’s roles at Muhlenberg have not been as uplifting as Flounder in “The Little Mermaid,” the artist has found ways to grow and be challenged while supporting himself.

McCray mentioned, “It’s definitely been a journey of taking on difficult roles and learning how to take off those characters, even though you feel connected to them, but then also making sure that Matthew is fine at the end of the day. It was definitely a great experience of challenging myself and learning each character, learning each movement style.

Beyond the worlds of theatre and dance, McCray has also been involved with film and continues to expand his craft in different academic environments and mediums. These films include the world premiere of Amira Jackson’s ‘24 “The Blessed Kente of the Amobis” (2022) and “Money Lovers” (2022).

He was also involved with the senior showcase course this spring which gave him the opportunity to perform in front of talent agencies in New York City during spring break. The experience provided him with an exciting future in the arts.

“I got three offers. So basically, I’m currently in the conversation with talking with all three of them, and then I’ll make my



Matt McCray ‘24 has spent his time at Muhlenberg in numerous arts performances including “In Motion.”

final decision of what I want to do based off of those meetings.

Reflecting on his own career at ‘Berg, McCray shared hopes for how the College can continue to improve based on his experiences in the arts, as well as being a hall director in East, former diversity, equity, inclusion & belonging chair of the Student Government Association and former president of the Men of Color Network.

“And I just challenge Muhlen-

berg in their academics, [the Theatre & Dance Department] to continue to strive to make improvements for people of color on campus and for more marginalized voices on campus to be heard and to be seen,” stated McCray. “And to have shows that really showcase the beauty of all perspectives, all voices and all races in order to make something that’s truly meaningful and can show the power of what worthy storytelling can be.”

Through the looking glass

Amber Cowan, an artist and educator, came to Muhlenberg and detailed the process that comes with creating sculpture glass art.

By SHAIYAN FEISAL
ARTS AND CULTURE EDITOR

On April 10, artist Amber Cowan visited Muhlenberg College and gave a talk about her sculptural glasswork. Amber Cowan creates her pieces using recycled glass materials and uses flameworking, hot sculpting and glass-blowing techniques to create large-scale sculptures. During her lecture, Cowan showed a video where she uses bonsai shears and a tabletop torch to create her glass art. Cowan prefers horror vacui, meaning there is a minimum amount of empty spaces in her artwork. Some recurring themes in her work include memory, domesticity and how art can be rejuvenated through the reuse of American pressed glass.

Cowan detailed how her primary material is “cullet.” This term describes scrap glass from pressed glass factories, but they can occasionally be found in antique stores, flea markets and donations of broken antiques from households across the United States. While Cowan was in graduate school, she found a barrel filled with old pink glass

from pink easter candy dishes with rabbits and chicken lids. As the glass melted very similarly to the glass she was trained to work with, she ended up using it for her artwork. This story developed her passion for finding the history behind the colors she uses for the work she creates. During her talk, she discussed the history of peach flow.

Lately, Cowan has been looking at her feminine perspective and has thought about expressing themes she sees in her personal life. For example, she has a continuous theme with her latest glasswork of a female figurine going on different adventures. Cowan specifically brought up a piece where the figure was about to get married, but instead she decided to go outside and enjoy nature. The piece used a light green color of pressed glass that was able to vividly show the female figurine along with elements of the outside world.

Jessica Ambler, the director of the Martin Art Gallery, detailed how she discovered Amber Cowan. She “first read about Amber Cowan’s work in a Hyperallergic article about her recent exhibi-

tion at WheatonArts’ Museum of American Glass. I was intrigued by her complex and unusual glass sculptures so I reached out to her. She was kind enough to invite me and one of my student gallery assistants (Lizard Foley ‘24) for a studio visit in Philadelphia, where she showed us current projects she’s working on, the types of glass she utilizes, and how she constructs these intricate works.”

In regards to what Muhlenberg students can take away from Cowan’s art, Ambler stated, “I think that the delicate beauty of Amber’s works belies the depth of meaning within them. She works with recurrent motifs and considers topics like womanhood and aging in her compositions. Another thing that stands out to me is the amount of research Amber conducts as an integral part of her practice. Since she utilizes antique American glass, often made by now-defunct companies, she invests a great amount of time research[ing] when and where each piece was made.”



Advocacy Day at Muhlenberg

'Berg students partner with Scholars at Risk.



Members of Muhlenberg Students for Scholars at Risk table in Seegers with a quilt.

By SHINAM HUSSAIN
ARTS AND CULTURE EDITOR

On April 15, members of the student body of the College participated in Advocacy Day. Students currently in their RJ Fellows Senior Seminar and students part of the course Rights, Refugee and Resettlement: Scholars at Risk Seminar spent the semester researching a respective scholar that the non-governmental organization, Scholars at Risk (SAR), had been advocating for. The semester was filled with research and preparation for Advocacy Day, to advocate for the release of these scholars from their respective incarcerations.

Muhlenberg students were working on behalf of four different scholars, each with their own unique cases that centered around the censorship of their academic work and life. The first scholar was G.N Saibaba, Ph.D. Saibaba was an English professor in India who had been imprisoned without evidence under India's Unlawful Activities

Prevention Act. The students representing Saibaba stated in their advocacy plan, "Although Professor Saibaba is released, the circumstances by which he was arrested still exist and pose a current threat to himself and to any other scholar whose views of academic and personal freedoms are contrary to the Indian government. We are raising awareness that release from jail is not the end goal in the fight for academic, expressive and human rights."

The entire concept surrounding Advocacy Day and SAR is the idea of academic freedom. In both classes, academic freedom and the preservation of such freedoms and rights has been the focus area and has grounded the work each student is contributing. Especially at a time when the overall political and social climate has been littered with turmoil and there have been higher tensions at universities across the globe among academics in how they can express their thoughts. Therefore, the advo-

cacy efforts students engaged in were for a wider struggle of preserving academic freedom and understanding its establishment as a human right.

Another scholar students were focused on was Abduljalil Al-Singace, Ph.D. Al-Singace is a Bahraini scholar and a retired professor of mechanical engineering at the University of Bahrain, who has been sentenced to life in prison. This came after Al-Singace was participating in a pro-democracy protest in March 2011, when authorities arrested Al-Singace and he has been imprisoned ever since. Students advocating on his behalf wrote, "We are tabling to get a sense of how students feel about academic freedom and to encourage community members to petition proper officials to lobby for Al-Singace's release."

Students were tabling in the Light Lounge of Seegers for the majority of the morning and into the late afternoon. The tables held different information and handouts on scholars that ranged

from informational pamphlets to poetry written by the scholars to pins advocating for release. There was also a talkback organized for Niloufar Bayani by the students advocating for her case, where Brian Mello, Ph.D., and Kate Richmond, Ph.D., joined to speak about incarceration and academic freedom. Students advocating for Bayani wrote, "The group will discuss the wrongful imprisonment of Iranian sustainability scholar Niloufar Bayani and her recent release."

The last scholar students had been advocating for was Ahmadreza Djalali, Ph.D. Djalali's students were tabling to raise awareness as well as collecting signatures for a petition they intend to send to the Swedish government in support of his release. Students wrote, "Professor Ahmadreza Djalali is a scholar of disaster medicine who was wrongfully arrested in Iran while participating in a series of academic workshops. He was sentenced to death for corruption on Earth. While awaiting ex-

ecution, he spends long periods in solitary confinement, which has greatly impacted his health. We are trying to raise awareness about his case and unlawful conviction and to collect signatures on a petition urging the Swedish government to fight for Djalali's release."

Many academics and scholars see their work as a form of art and expression of what they are passionate about. The censorship of academic thought not only puts academics in potentially life-threatening situations and institutions based around violence, but it also completely suppresses them from indulging in what they are passionate about, what they have dedicated their lives to. Saibaba speaks to this in the poetry he wrote while imprisoned, because as much as he desired to be let out, what he desired most was to return to his classroom, to continue doing what he loves.



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Best thing about being a woman twin

By SARAH WEDEKING
MANAGING EDITOR

When I tell people at ‘Berg that I am a twin, one of two things happens. Either they will look up from their Canvas pages, eyes widening and gasping, saying, “You’re a twin? That’s so cool!” Or, the more surprising option, “That’s really cool, I think [insert other ‘Berg student] is a twin too!” The latter option took me aback; I am no longer the only twin in my small school. But as I like to say, part of a secret society: the ‘Berg community of twins. It’s so secret, we don’t even know how many members there are.

Being here for four years, I’ve found out there is a strange number of twins on campus. When drafting this piece, I had a list of over ten people, all twins, I wanted to reach out to. I’m sure there are even more twins at ‘Berg. I wish I had an explanation for this but rather it will be why the Noshery blondies taste

so good: forever a mystery.

“The reaction I get almost every time is basically shock and excitement followed by a million questions on what it is like to be a twin,” Peter Schumann ‘27 said. Schumann is a fraternal twin with his sister going to a separate school. According to Schumann, they still text and call each other frequently.

When one of my friends found out I was a twin, they sauntered down Academic Row, shocked and wide-eyed when they saw my sister. She gasped, “How did I not know this?” One time I showed a picture of my twin and I together in The Weekly office, and one of our editors said, “That’s scary” as their face lingered under the yellow Seegers light.

“I’ve met more twins on campus than I’ve thought,” Noah Berger ‘24 said. His fraternal twin goes to another school, though people are surprised to learn Berger has one. “When I show [people] a picture, typical-

ly, they still do not believe it.”

“I think I have met around four pairs of twins so far, but I know there are more,” Lauren Fluckiger ’27 said. “Since this is a smaller school, it is a little odd.”

Fluckiger is an identical twin. “We did not go to the same college because we have very different interests,” Fluckiger explained. “I think a lot of people see us as a package deal... we aren’t the same people.”

As an identical twin, I hate when people assume we are the same person. It is demeaning and hurtful. Don’t get me wrong, I love being a twin. I love my sister to the moon and back, but like that Monday, April 8, our individual identities are often eclipsed. This is one of the reasons we decided to go to different schools.

“I wish people knew we’re our own person,” Aidan Silvestri ‘25 said. “People often don’t acknowledge that we’re genuinely different people who have separate lives.”

“[For] identical twins specifically, I wish people wouldn’t try so hard to figure out how to tell us apart,” Katharine Olson ’27 said. “I prefer [for people] to just ask.”

While I could never do a fun twin prank, plenty of students have. “My sister and I made up a fake language to get a rise out of my parents,” Schumann said.

Olson and her twin, as well as Elle and Aidan Silvestri have swapped places. “Me and Elle had these classes at the same time with these two professors who we were close with who were really chill,” Aidan Silvestri said. “So we were like, if we’re going to pull a prank, it should be these two teachers at this time. Then we swapped classes.”

At its core, I love my twin and I truly can’t imagine my life without her. Even though our twin status means our college graduations are on the same day at the same time.

“My favorite thing about being a twin is that I have a built-in

support system,” Fluckiger said. “No matter what, she is always there for me, and she knows me better than anyone, even myself.”

Berger said, “You always have someone to hang out with when you’re home on breaks.”

“I feel like she knows me better than I know myself,” Aidan Silvestri said.

“She’s my partner in crime.” Olson said, “My partner in everything.”

The best part about being a twin is knowing that there is always someone on your side. My twin, even though she has the same face, the same eyes, and the same middle school obsession with “Doctor Who,” is the Watson to my Holmes and the Kirk to my Spock. I wouldn’t have it any other way.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SARAH WEDEKING ‘24.



Sarah Wedeking ‘24 and her sister as infants; she can’t even tell who’s who.

By ILLAN HASS
STAFF WRITER

Reflection at sunset on the beach in Tel Aviv with my sister Netta after visiting an art gallery all day and doing five cartwheels in the sand

The canvas was mostly white, terrained with pale gray, a faint purple billowing into view; then emerged a single claw, coal black curves that faded into molten brown and hints of red, acrylic hues layered thick and flaring, the texture tumulted like the surface of the sea, now halved by sunglow, starflame thundering over horizon and through waves, black ripples ripping through the yellow band,

our sun an unwavering gaze unavoidable from any perspective.

In the narrow hallway, the painting was too large, there was not enough space to step back, to allow the image to clarify itself —

then the falcon erupts from the paint, soaring, striking, turbulent, shaping the lonely purple wind, its avian eye suddenly staring back into mine.



PHOTO FROM PIXABAY.

Order in the court

Reflections on the law school application process

By MATTHEW KLINGER
NEWS EDITOR

I am really lucky to be attending Duke Law in the fall. As I reflect on my admissions process, one thing stands out: I could not have done it alone. I was only able to get to this point from the help and advice of others. As I leave Muhlenberg, I want to impart some wisdom on what it takes to get into a T14 law school, so that others from Muhlenberg can do the same.

The biggest piece of advice I have is to surround yourself with people who will both support you and push you. Studying for the LSAT was one of the hardest things I have done. It took me nine months, and the majority of weeks I clocked in at about 15-20 hours of studying. That was on top of classes, clubs and ensembles. If I had not had people around me to support me and check in on me, I would have been so burned out that it would have been impossible. I also needed people around me to push me. There were times I wanted to give up or settle for a lower score. If I had not had people around me telling me that I was capable of more and that I would regret not pushing myself

further, then I would never have done as well as I did. Sometimes you need people to cut through the self-doubt and mental fatigue and remind you of what you set out to do and what you are capable of.

Second, ace the LSAT. This is your biggest tool in the admissions process. I recommend using 7Sage. The progress will be slow at first, but trust the process. Make sure you are regularly doing drills and practicing different skills. If you need a tutor, then get one. Yes, they are expensive, but the higher your LSAT score, the better the school and the better the scholarship. It will pay off to pay more and do better. Trust me. I improved my score by five points using a tutor, which is the difference between paying full tuition and getting a full ride.

Third, do research with a professor. Find out what interests you, and then find someone who can guide you as you explore that topic. Not only is doing research a great way to learn something new and interesting, but you will also improve your writing skills, which are essential for both the application process and law school in general. And, if you are able to get it published, that is even better. The majority

of applicants do not have a published paper, and this will help you stand out. Doing research will also give you a stellar letter of recommendation, as the professor you work with will get to know you really well. The more personal the letter, the better.

Lastly, find your why. Law schools want to admit students who are passionate about the law. Before applying, do some soul-searching and ask yourself why you want to go to law school. When did the idea of going to law school first come across your mind? How do your values align with the legal profession? Those are all important questions to ask yourself, and being able to answer those questions with a compelling narrative is super important. I have heard of people getting into top law schools with a GPA and LSAT score that were below both medians but had such a compelling reason for going to law school that they got in anyway.

This is by no means an exhaustive list, nor should it be taken as a sure-fire way to get into a top law school. Ultimately, what you put into the process is what you will get out of it, and it may not always be necessary for your career goals to go to a top law school. In fact, many

people are still able to get jobs at top firms without going to top schools; they might just have to work harder in law school to get there. Muhlenberg prepared me well, and it will prepare you well too. Just remember, everything happens for a reason, so give it your all, trust the process, and everything will fall into place.

Senior campus voices - The Muhlenberg Weekly seniors say goodbye.

PHOTO BY PHOTO EDITOR KIRA BRETSKY '27.



Matthew Klinger '24 gives his law school application advice.

Signing off

By OLIVIA OBERMAN
SPORTS EDITOR

It is one thing to be passionate about something, it is another to be in a room full of people who care deeply about the same thing as you. If I had to summarize my time at The Weekly in one sentence, it would be the previous. It's pretty hard to put the experience of spending a few years of writing thousands of words into one, short, summary of them. When I think of my time at The Muhlenberg Weekly, I remember the people. I reflect on the late nights spent laughing with my friends, showing up to the office in my soccer practice gear, how serious it felt to me to change just a few words in making a story whole, how empowering it felt to write the articles I wanted to write and the incredible stories I heard from so many different people I may have not had the chance to meet elsewhere.

Writing for The Weekly has given me purpose and allowed me to be a part of something bigger than myself. There has always been something melancholy about taking that late-night walk home from the office and strolling down a silent, lit-up, academic row while the rest of campus was tucked away. The feelings that follow a meaningful publication, thinking of the perfect title, or last sentence for a wholesome article are quite indescribable.

Writing has always been a passion of mine, and I was not sure how I would fulfill it in college while studying the sciences. During my summer advising session going into my freshman year, I was shown a photo of my grandfather during his time at Muhlenberg standing in The Weekly office. It struck a chord inside of me to follow that unique characteristic and passion of his, that I had never

known about before. Working up the courage to walk into The Weekly office on a Tuesday night during my sophomore year was the best decision I could have made and I am proud that I did. I had no idea those small steps would lead to something I would become so deeply connected to.

I want to thank every person I have had the honor of meeting and learning from since joining The Weekly, you all know who you are. I want to thank all of those who were always willing to give me a quote or provide perspectives to an article that would most likely only be reaching a small population. But isn't that the beauty of life anyway? Being so passionate about something that the act of just participating is enough for you? I think that is what this whole thing was about for me. It has certainly been one meaningful journey that I will never forget, thank you.



Olivia Oberman '24 says goodbye to the Muhlenberg Weekly,

Letter to the editor

Dear Editor,

Regarding the article “International elections: A dictator, with consent,” published on March 7, 2024, I would like to express my disagreement with some of the points mentioned. While Nayib Bukele was re-elected as the President of El Salvador with 85% of the vote, he should not have been eligible to run. In May 2021, his party overhauled the judiciary, which led to a controversial re-interpretation of the constitution, allowing him to run for a second consecutive term. This ruling permitted Bukele to step back six months before the election, and the legislature appointed his personal secretary as an interim president. In 2022, El Salvador declared a state of exception where anyone considered suspicious could be arrested without cause and denied legal representation. This order has been devastating for many families and communities as livelihoods have been wiped out due to thousands of indiscriminate arrests. These points are significant from a human rights perspective and should be highlighted to provide readers with a clear understanding of the context surrounding the elections in El Salvador.

Best regards,
Noah Halterman-Mitchell '24



Memorial Hall Gymnasium sees high attendance at a wrestling match.

How can we increase the visibility of women’s sports?

By Abby Scheidel
Rookie Writer

It was a classic doubleheader basketball game in Memorial Hall and the student section was packed with cheering fans for the Muhlenberg men’s basketball team. When the final buzzer went off and the teams headed to their designated locker rooms, the bleachers began to empty as the women’s basketball team took the court. With their warm-up music playing and lay-up lines being executed, only a few stragglers and some parents remained. “It’s like evacuate the place,” said Caroline Horst ‘24 to her teammates.

“It was upsetting to see because in close and important games, the fans bring the energy and it can create a home-court advantage against the other team,” explained Horst. However, the small crowds don’t impact the team’s motivation to play. “Unfortunately, I believe one reason why it doesn’t lead to a lack of motivation is because we’ve grown accustomed to similar situations from past seasons; so, it’s not unexpected or unusu-

al,” said Horst. Title IX was created in 1972 to prevent sex-based discrimination, and to provide equal opportunities in education for both males and females. But there is still work that needs to be done. Sports was added to Title IX in 1975, requiring all types of educational institutions to support male and female athletes equally. There is a lot that goes into this, including ensuring equal access to sports facilities, training sessions or equipment and also monitoring participation, coaching salaries, revenues and expenses. Despite Title IX, there is a large divide between men’s and women’s college basketball, particularly when it comes to viewership. The men’s March Madness championship game in 2023 had 14.7 million viewers, a record low, while the women had 9.92 million, but peaked at 12.6 million. This was a record for the women, which highlights the hope for the future of their game. Part of this had to do with stars such as Caitlin Clark and Angel Reese, players who made a large impact on the game.

But here at Muhlenberg, men’s basketball draws significantly bigger audiences. Erslin Pierre ‘24 considers himself an avid sports fan, but has a preference for basketball, and explained that Muhlenberg men’s basketball is “more free-flowing and less reliant on motion offense makes it more engaging, especially when the best offensive players get the ball more during possessions.” He believes that there is a difference in athleticism and since it is very rare to see a woman dunk, the men’s games are more engaging. Emily Vaughan ‘25 also sees a difference between men’s and women’s basketball. “Men’s games are aired more on television making it more convenient to watch. Overall, men’s sports tend to be faster and played at a much higher level than women’s. I have found men’s basketball, the sport I watch most, to be more competitive, quicker and more engaging to the audience,” said Vaughan. Despite all of this, women’s basketball is taking a large turn in a positive direction and has grown exponentially, with the

‘Clark effect’ as a catalyst for that turn. On March 3, 2024, Clark scored 35 points, reaching a career total of 3,685, against Ohio State, surpassing Pete Maravich’s record of most career points in NCAA history since 1970. Caitlin Clark has made history over her four years at the University of Iowa, and continued to do so in her March Madness run, but finally fell to South Carolina in the championship game. She scored 483 points in this year’s March Madness run, which was the most ever, breaking more records. In the 2023-24 regular season, viewership of women’s basketball has increased significantly. Clark, along with other college players like Reese, Paige Bueckers, Cameron Brink and Kamilla Cardoso have paved the way for a new generation of girls in a world dominated by men’s sports. “Guys will say the game is not as fun to watch, but Caitlin Clark is fun to watch,” said Shay Ijiwoye, one of Arizona’s top high school players and a Stanford commit, to AP News. “I think she’s inspiring a lot of young kids

my age, older, younger, that you can have that confidence and do it just as well as any guy could.” The NCAA women’s championship made history by drawing more viewership than the men’s for the first time. But it took superstars breaking records to shift the focus toward women’s sports. Vaughan sees this too but still understands the domination of men’s basketball that may never truly go away. “Women’s basketball teams such as Iowa with Caitlin Clark, South Carolina and UConn have been getting more love on social media, television and attendance at the game. However, men’s basketball consistently sells out arenas despite who is playing,” commented Vaughan. “I feel like more people should give women’s basketball a chance, especially in marquee matches and key games as the intensity and competitiveness gets stronger,” said Pierre.

Women’s tennis timeline

By Lexi Sipos
Assistant Sports Editor

Muhlenberg women’s tennis has been working on and off the court to produce a win. Although the scoreboard has not favored them recently, they are making strides within their team culture and mindset. Although they dropped their last to Gettysburg on April 13, these experiences are helping the team create goals for future matches. Kety Gaidamashvili ‘26 outlined their match goals. “Our pre-match goals were to adapt quickly to the challenging weather conditions, particularly the strong winds, which made it difficult to maintain our usual playing rhythm. We learned from our previous match with Dickinson under similar conditions

that flexibility and adaptability were key. This influenced our team dynamic by emphasizing the need for quick adjustments and a positive mindset despite the challenging circumstance.” Looking to the future, the girls have a streamlined vision. More specifically, they have things to work on. Giadamashvili commented, “The past few matches highlighted the need to improve our performance in sudden death points at deuce. Our goal moving forward is to sharpen our focus during these critical moments and maintain our fighting spirit throughout each match. Despite the challenges, the matches have motivated us to work harder and become more resilient as a team. As a team that is in the process of rebuilding, we know we are

not currently in the spot we would like to be but we are going through the process. We know we are improving and sometimes the final set scores may not necessarily reflect our progress, as long as we keep the right mindset throughout the season and in preparation for the next, we will pave the way for our success.” In a similar light, Sophia Framm ‘24 said, “The past few matches have shown that our team has a lot of potential for the future. Despite this being my last season, I know that the players continuing next year and incoming first years will be able to keep improving and maintain the positive attitude we’ve had all season. We’ve done a great job of cheering each other on during matches and even during practice, which shows the con-

fidence of the young players on our team as they continue to improve their skills and show our support as a team.” The girls not only have a positive mindset on the season, but they are recognizing their strengths and weaknesses for future success. Julia Lennon ‘26 said, “I think cheering each other on has helped us form a bond with one another. Something we’re working on is staying in the moment by taking it point by point.” Framm shared the same perspective. “I think shot selection and point construction are key points of any tennis match that this team has been and will continue to work on as our 2024 season comes to an end. There’s been a definitive improvement on both fronts in a short period, and the team can only keep im-

proving as our coaching staff and players help each other get comfortable and confident in their shots during practice which translates into what we see on the court during matches.” Ultimately, the girls have all the tools needed to produce the outcome they want. Their positive attitude and clear communication will be big parts of their success. Mainly, since all the girls are on the same page, they can have continuity on and off the court. Their hard work is exciting to watch, and fans are looking forward to seeing their play during the rest of the season. The Mule’s women’s tennis team will host Eastern University at home on Saturday, April 20 for their senior-day match.

Hitting the green

By NOAH BERGER
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

The Muhlenberg golf teams are in the midst of their spring seasons, as both the men’s and women’s teams participated in tournaments this past weekend. The men’s team traveled to Franklin & Marshall College, while the women traveled to Millersville University.

The men’s and women’s teams both spent some time hitting the green over spring break and their matchups this past weekend were some of the major events since coming off of the break. Alex McCauley ‘26 talked about the approach of the team since spring break ended: “Since spring break, we have really settled into our practice schedule. People are going to the course to play more than I have ever seen, especially the newer team members. Spring break was a warm-up, we were just getting loose and remembering how to generally play golf. Kicking off the cobwebs, if you will. Now we are more focused on tournament play, how to avoid difficult situations, and strategies for specific courses we will play.” McCauley and the rest of the team are focused on what’s to come for the rest of the season.

Kaylin Foss ‘25 talked about some of the goals the team has for the rest of the season. “Our team goals are mostly to gain as much insight about our game as possible,” said Foss. “Through playing at other tournaments we can gauge what we need to work on the most before the centennial

conferences.” Foss seems committed to showing that the Mules have a place to play as the Centennial Conference (CC) championship approaches.

While the whole team wants to succeed in the CC tournament, each player on the team has some individual goals as well. McCauley noted, “Individually, I am continuing to work on focus. I know I can hit the shots I need to score and place well, it’s just a matter of committing to the shot. Recently, I have been trying to change the dialogue in my head during my pre-shot routine. I acknowledge that bad shots can happen, but they won’t, because I know I’m a better player than that. I’m also trying to improve every aspect of my game equally so nothing gets forgotten.”

Although the women’s team is smaller than the men’s in rostered players, both sides are committed to the same goal—helping to win the CC championship. Foss said, “We have a lot of new golfers so I think we’re focusing a lot on team bonding and helping each other out. Some of the girls haven’t played golf competitively for some time or let alone at all so it’s important to be there for one another and help out when needed.” Team bonding seems to be a big part of the group dynamic so everyone can support each other on and off the green.

As the season continues, the team has a positive outlook for what is ahead. McCauley said, “Our team is focused on improving our tournament play

every day. We try to practice like we’re in a tournament and really focus on every shot we need to make. Goals for the team at the conference championship include finishing in a better spot than last year. The teams in our conference continue to underestimate us, hopefully, we can show them why they are wrong.”

The Mules are well-positioned to make a push in the CC playoffs, as they look to bring home a trophy for Muhlenberg to create history in Allentown. Aron Giachandani said, “One big team goal heading into the CC Championship is getting to know the golf course so we can hit good enough shots into each hole.”

PHOTO BY ALEX MCCAULEY ‘26.



Men’s golf practices during the fall semester.

MUHLENBERG COLLEGE THEATRE & DANCE

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PHOTO BY JEM BERNEY '26.



Men's track competes at DeSales on April 13.

Winning big at the Muhlenberg Invitational

By PENELOPE SCHNEIDER
STAFF WRITER

On Friday, April 12, the track and field program hosted the Muhlenberg Invitational, an absolute triumph for the Mules. They set new school records in several events and displayed an impressive depth of talent across the board. The athletes' hard work and dedication paid off as they showed skill and determination that left their competitors in awe.

The Muhlenberg track and field teams' success continued on Saturday at the DeSales Invitational, where they faced stiff competition. Despite this, the Mules remained undaunted and brought their A-game to the field, again showing their mettle and strength. The performances were marked by excellent teamwork, coordination, and individual brilliance, with many athletes putting in personal bests.

The Muhlenberg track and field program had an unforgettable invitational day as two of

its seniors, Dylan DeMagistris '24 and Faith Fezenko '24, made a great impact with their exceptional performances in their respective events. DeMagistris, with his remarkable hammer throw skills, launched a massive throw of 176-4, shattering the school record and cementing his position as the second-best thrower in the Centennial Conference (CC) history. Fezenko, on the other hand, was not far behind, with a throw of 153-10 that catapulted her to a coveted third place on the CC all-time list.

The achievements of these two athletes sparked a fire within the Mules, which went on to dominate the meet. Their success resulted from their individual talent, hard work, and the supportive and positive environment that characterizes the program.

One of the athletes, Paola Navarro '25, shared her approach to practices and competitions, saying, "I keep a super positive mindset when practicing and competing. I try to treat practic-

es and meets the same as much as I can, and it helps with nerves. It's also so nice to have such supportive teammates, and even at my lows, I can easily get myself up and keep moving." This spirit of positivity and support fuels the collective and individual successes of the Muhlenberg program.

Moreover, several athletes secured regional qualifying marks and set new records. Graduate student John Reichenbach, who recently landed third in the CC long jump history, continued his impressive performance by winning both the long and high jumps at the Muhlenberg Invitational. His outstanding performance earned him a tie for tenth place in the conference record books. In addition to Reichenbach, other athletes like DeMagistris, Fezenko, Noel House '24 and the electrifying 4x100 meter relay team, composed of first-years and a junior, showcased their exceptional talent by securing coveted regional qualifying marks. This collective effort highlighted the depth and

talent the Muhlenberg program is known for.

Erica Borbi '25, another standout athlete from Muhlenberg, spoke highly of her team and coaches. "I owe so much to my teammates and coaches at Muhlenberg—they push me out of my comfort zone, support me, and have helped shape the person and athlete I am today," she said. "My main goal this season is to go out and make them proud. Plus, competing in our conference championship at home is a huge motivator. We're excited to defend our house and leave it on the track." Having a support system makes or breaks a program, but with us mules, we are nothing short of nonstop support.

This is evident as success continued at the DeSales Invitational, where the Mules combined for an impressive 11 new or improved Centennial Conference qualifiers and five regional qualifiers. David Seel '27 and Jaden Snow '27 displayed exceptional talent by securing victories, while Mike Powel '26 and Noel

House '24 flexed their muscles to triumph in their respective events.

The Muhlenberg College track and field team has been achieving outstanding results with its recent performances, setting a high bar for its competitors. The team comprises talented athletes who work hard and are determined to succeed—first-years, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. For example, Shira Gamson's '26 domination in the long and triple jumps, Maya Richwine's '27 prowess in the 100 and 400 hurdles, graduate student John Reichenbach's reign in the long and high jumps, and Maxwell Broadbent's '27 entry into the all-time top 10 list in the triple jump at the DeSales Invitational.

The Muhlenberg track and field team is well-positioned for continued success with a committed coaching staff. Their impressive performances bode well for the remainder of the season, and it's clear that they are a force to be reckoned with in the sport.

Coming up this week in

SPORTS

Apr. 18 - Apr 24.

Men's Baseball	Track	Men's Lax	Women's Lax
<div>MUHLENBERG at HAVERFORD</div> <div>Fri, Apr. 19 @ 3:30 p.m. Haverford, Pa</div>	<div>MUHLENBERG at COACH POLLARD INVITATIONAL</div> <div>Sat, Apr. 20 @ 10:00 a.m. Bethlehem, Pa.</div>	<div>MUHLENBERG vs DIPLOMATS FRANKLIN AND MARSHALL</div> <div>Sat, Apr. 20 @ 12:00 p.m. Scotty Wood Stadium</div>	<div>MUHLENBERG vs MCDANIEL</div> <div>Sat, Apr. 20 @ 1:00 p.m. Varsity Field</div>

PHOTO FROM MUHLENBERG'S ZENFOLIO.



Faculty take the stage at last year's commencement ceremony.

Faculty depart from ‘Berg

By KATHERINE CONLON
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Shifts in the faculty roster is a common occurrence in colleges and universities across the country. However, in recent weeks, The Weekly has been made aware of the imminent departure of many of the College’s faculty members. As of now, we are aware of at least five faculty members leaving the school of their own volition. This number does not include professors on adjunct or visiting contracts, those who were fired or placed on leave and those retiring. Several of these six professors are

tenured or have tenure-track positions. Securing a job with the level of security provided in these kinds of roles is an increasingly uncommon occurrence in an academic market that is hyper-competitive. So, the question that arises is: why are so many faculty members leaving these coveted positions?
“Faculty (and staff) at colleges and universities across the country have been making career changes more often than usual since the emergency phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a national trend and a phenomenon in all market sectors,” said Provost Laura Furge, Ph.D.

Furge went on to explain that the College has been conducting interviews in search of replacement professors. However, despite the introduction of these new faculty members, one questions how departments are coping with a high turnover rate.
In the public health department, Director and Associate Professor of Public Health Chrysian Cronin, Ph.D., is no longer teaching at the College as of next semester. This leaves Assistant Professor of Public Health Kathleen Bachynski, Ph.D., as the only faculty member whose primary appointment is public health. In the course catalog for

next semester, the department is only offering five classes, one of which, Environmental Health, has no instructor listed.
Moving to the sociology department, only one professor, Sahar Sadeghi, Ph.D., is currently slated to teach. In addition, three sections of Introduction to Sociology remain open, with no professor scheduled to teach them yet.
However, the loss of a colleague does not necessarily mean that a department will lose its academic clout. In the computer science department, Assistant Professor Jorge Silveyra, Ph.D., is planning to leave

the College. Two professors remain in the department, Hamed Yaghoobian, Ph.D., and Proyash Podder, Ph.D. “The departure of Dr. Silveyra represents a major transition for our department, particularly at a time when we are keenly focused on expanding our faculty to meet the increasing demands of our growing student body in the Computer Science program,” said Yaghoobian.
For computer science, this comes in the form of a revamped curriculum. “Additionally, we are actively exploring the introduction of new elective courses,

SEE FACULTY PAGE 4

A new era for Greek life

By AMY SWARTZ
NEWS EDITOR

Amy Swartz is involved in Greek life.
Fraternity and Sorority Life (FSL) at Muhlenberg College has had a massive project in the works for multiple years- and it’s finally come to fruition. On April 15, members of the Muhlenberg community involved in Greek life received an email from Associate Director of Fraternity and Sorority Life Natalie Shaw announcing an updated policy, allowing first-year students to participate in sorority and fraternity recruitment during their second semester.
Previously, both formal and informal recruitment were

open to all sophomores, juniors and seniors. This new recruitment model puts Muhlenberg College in a similar position to most other comparable institutions. Muhlenberg was one of 12 schools left across the nation to use a sophomore recruitment process.
Next academic year, formal sorority recruitment will take place in both the fall and spring semesters. In the fall it will be open to current sophomores, juniors and seniors, and in the spring it will be open to all second-semester first-years and onwards at Muhlenberg College, assuming that they meet requirements including GPA and overall good standing.
The proposal for this change,

authored by Shaw, 2023 Panhellenic Council President Hilary Rappaport ‘24 and 2023 Interfraternity Council President Justin Billich ‘24, was presented to Haring and senior staff members earlier this semester.
Taking a look at the submitted proposal, there seem to be very specific and direct goals that were the foundation for the change. “Through this proposed adjustment, we seek to promote early involvement and integration of incoming students into the fraternity and sorority community, ultimately enriching their collegiate experience, facilitating their personal and professional growth, and providing an additional means of retention. We also hope to expand on

the current membership experience to provide a more robust and enriching community.”
When asked what the reasoning was behind this change, Rappaport said, “This change is extremely important, as many students struggle to find a community during their first year at Muhlenberg. Fraternity & Sorority Life members shared that they would have benefited from having the opportunity to go through recruitment during their first year. It is difficult to make meaningful relationships when adjusting to college life, yet Greek Life allows students to connect with individuals who share similar interests and values. Through these relationships, a sense of support and

trust is established.”
Looking at enrollment numbers of Greek organizations from Fall 2018, as opposed to Fall 2023, all organizations had their number of active members decline. The only exception is the fraternity Alpha Epsilon Pi, which wasn’t yet established at Muhlenberg College in 2018. Allowing first-year students to go through recruitment will increase membership numbers at the College. However, it is still unclear just how much chapter totals will change, as they are provided by the National Interfraternal Council and the National Panhellenic Council.
It is also unclear how individual

SEE RECRUITMENT PAGE 3

Arts & Culture

“Head Over Heels” debuts at Muhlenberg.
PAGE 6

Campus Voices

The Muhlenberg Weekly seniors say their final goodbyes.
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Sports

Track and field coach Brad Hackett retires.
PAGE 12

THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY

Serving the Muhlenberg College Community since 1883

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The Muhlenberg Weekly strives for accuracy in reporting and writing, but we acknowledge that mistakes happen. Readers are invited to submit corrections about errors in articles, and they should be submitted to weeklyeditor@gmail.com. Corrections are also brought to our staff’s attention by our own editors and writers. Our staff will review the suggested correction, consult with the author of the article, and issue the appropriate correction. Online corrections are located at the bottom of the article. Print corrections are located within the paper, on the page indicated in the online edition. However, The Weekly does not grant take-down requests for articles.

ADVERTISING POLICY

We request that advertising material be submitted by the Monday preceding publication at 5 p.m. If materials have not been received at that time, the advertisement will not run and the advertiser is still responsible for 100% payment. We reserve the right to decline any advertisement that is misleading, inaccurate, fraudulent, or deemed generally unacceptable. This determination will be made by the Business Staff in consultation with the Editor-in-Chief. The Muhlenberg Weekly maintains a distinction between its news & editorial content and advertising. As such, advertisements will not be accepted if they imitate the general style of The Weekly, intentionally or unintentionally. Examples of this include, but are not limited to: headlines, bylines, fonts, and column-arrangements. In order to make this distinction, The Weekly also reserves the right to include the word “advertisement” on any advertisement that is deemed too native.

CAMPUS SAFETY NOTES

4/16

Fire Alarms—There was a report of fire alarms sounding in Brown Hall.

Found Property—There was a report of found property in Prosser Hall.

Noise Complaint—There was a report of a noise complaint at an off-campus location.

Location Check—There was a report of a location check on Tilghman Street.

Lost Property—There was a report of lost property at an undisclosed location.

4/17

Institutional Vandalism—There was a report of institutional vandalism in Seegers Union.

Medical—There was a report of a sick student in Trumbower.

4/18

Outside Agency—There was a report to assist an outside agency at an off-campus location.

Fire Alarms—There was a report of fire alarms sounding on Chew Street.

4/20

College Policy—There was a report of an animal in the Village parking lot.

4/21

Medical—There was a report of an injured employee in the front circle.

Outside Agency—There was a report to help an outside agency at Robertson Hall.

Medical—There was a report of a sick student at Robertson Hall.

Student spotlight: Sana Nauman ‘26

By EMILY NALLY
ASSISTANT CAMPUS VOICES EDITOR

Sana Nauman ‘26 is a neuroscience major here at Muhlenberg College, and recently she has become involved in interesting research with Jordanna Sprayberry, Ph.D. and fellow peers about bumblebees. “We focus on bumblebee odor navigation, and basically how human interferences such pesticides, fungicides, etc. can affect the bees’ navigation,” Nauman describes regarding the mission of the research. When there are these human interferences, bees are unable to find food sources, which poses a threat to the ecosystem.

With such a fascinating topic, Nauman recalls the moment in which she found herself intrigued by the interactions bees have in our human-impacted environment. She remembers being outside around campus and noticing a “bunch of bees just dead on the ground” and wondering how that came to be. Nauman was then reminded of a paper her friend was working on relating to this topic and decided to just “hop in the lab,”

where she began the journey of her bee research. Nauman felt like she “clicked” with the structure and social environment of the research pretty immediately, igniting her passion for working on the project. She started this last summer and took a half credit this past fall semester. Now she is doing research for one full credit this spring.

“This all kind of ties back into my passion for neuroscience,” Nauman expresses when asked what she finds most fascinating about the research. “I just love the whole idea of neuroplasticity,” which can be understood as the brain’s ability to reorganize and form synaptic connections, especially in regards to learning and experience following injury. “Bees are very small,” she goes on to say, “but they have their antennas. That’s basically how they used to perceive different odors and stuff. They’re so complex and so different on an individual level. They kind of remind me of, like, small people, in a sense.” Nauman has always been intrigued by small animals, insects and the complexity that lies within them.

As of right now in the research, Nauman has a pretty hands-on role. With fellow researchers graduating soon, she is starting to take more of a lead in the project and notes that soon, she will be doing more “one-on-one” with Sprayberry to discuss future projects she can do, and where this research may lead them. Nauman is currently a pre-med student and plans to possibly go to med school sometime in the future, so she “probably won’t pursue this research after undergraduate,” but she still mentions how this project will carry with her and connect to the future of her studies.

“I learned a lot from this lab, such as communicating with other lab peers and adapting to different environments, because in a lab, for example, if one protocol doesn’t work, you have to find another one. And so just those critical thinking skills I think will help no matter what field you go into.” The research, she hopes, will be continued and passed down to “younger lab mates” in the future, because the topic, she explains, has a wider purpose. “We

are exploring the interferences that humans do that come with climate change, like pesticides, farming and whatnot, and how that affects populations of bumblebees whether or not they can efficiently track down a food source.”

In terms of the general topic of how research is conducted here at Muhlenberg, Nauman had a positive and insightful response. “I love this question, because I always bring this up on my tours, but one thing I really love about Muhlenberg is how strong the bonds between our science departments and students are,” Nauman expressed. “I see the neuroscience people and I know every one of them personally, which I feel is something that’s so hard to see at other, especially larger, schools.”

Nauman notes how easy it was to get involved with research at Muhlenberg just as a first-year student. “Anyone can do it, all you have to do is reach out to the professor and they’re more than happy to let you volunteer in that lab.”

Going beyond the focus of her research though, Nauman want-

ed to share her overall thoughts regarding getting involved in labs and projects. She notes the “imposter syndrome” that can come with research when students wonder if they are even capable of doing or understanding the work, which Nauman believes “often deters students from then pursuing research.” Despite that, Nauman still believes that students are capable of doing and understanding their research. “You don’t have to be scared about not knowing anything,” Nauman ends with, “because at the end of the day, we all don’t really know anything, you know?” It is a learning process for anyone involved with any type of research, and is something, as Nauman has explained, that has taught her many new skills she will carry forever, going beyond perhaps the buzzing topic of bees.



Students march with Voices of Strength during Take Back the Night.

Supporting survivors

Voices of Strength marched and spoke out for survivors of sexual violence.

By ALEXANDRA DOWNEY
STAFF WRITER

With signs that read, “Believe Survivors” and “Stand Up for Our Right to Be Free From Fear,” students marched and chanted across academic row on the evening of April 15. Take Back the Night is an event that aims to spread awareness of and end sexual violence, and has been held internationally since 1973. For Muhlenberg, it has historically been hosted by the women’s and gender studies department until Prevention Education and Title IX took over a few years ago.

This year, after a demand to remove faculty involvement, Voices of Strength (VOS) took over the initiative, which notably marks the first time the event has been entirely student-run. VOS intern and organizer of the event, Emily Orlich ‘24 shared, “One of the things people complained about last year was how the staff and faculty sort of took over it and students did not feel

completely safe to share their stories, so we wanted that to not occur this year. VOS members are trained to help survivors, but we are also not mandatory reporters (except two who are RAs but at this event their mandatory reporting status was not in place). Most people on the campus who are trained on helping survivors are mandatory reporters and we know that reporting is scary and painful and is not the right choice for everyone, so we wanted to make this a space where you could share without having to choose between reporting or not. We just wanted this to be a safe space for people to share and receive support without having to choose between reporting.”

The first part of Take Back the Night was the march, where participants were given a sheet with anti-sexual violence chants to yell together during their route on academic row. Director of Women’s and Gender Studies and Professor of Psychology

Kate Richmond, Ph.D., attended the initial march, echoing the students’ demands for a safe campus. She emphasized the importance of speaking out in this manner, particularly on a college campus: “Take Back the Night events help to raise awareness about sexual assault and violence against women, especially on college campuses. By marching, students are able to challenge rape culture, promote consent and advocate for safer campuses. The take back allows survivors a chance to share their stories and break the silence—an important step in reducing shame and stigma. Together, students foster a sense of solidarity, which is necessary to create meaningful change.”

After the march wrapped back around to Seegers, attendees gathered inside for a speak-out, where they were provided the space to freely share their experiences with sexual violence. Above all else, the safety of the students was prioritized. With

no faculty or mandatory reporting allowed, the event focused on offering a safe space for students to share and listen without fear of being required to take action. On the decision to not have any faculty present during the speak-out, Orlich stated, “Additionally, we acknowledge that while faculty and staff are here to support us, sometimes they can cause harm, so we felt that by having this be a purely student space it would be more comfortable. Additionally, we had two members of the Crime Victim Council who were confidential resources who were there to provide support if people did not want to talk to other students.”

Students were allowed to share their stories at their own disclosure with simple boundaries in place, like requesting that no one describe their abuser in identifiable detail. Everyone present was encouraged to step out if they needed to do so, and members of the Crime Victim Council present had a plethora

of resources readily available.

Mason Tompkins ‘26 weighed in on his experience attending the event, “This was my first Take Back of The Night and one of my first events as a member of Voices of Strength. Going into this event, I have to say that I underprepared myself for the impact that this was going to have on me. I knew many of the people in attendance and considered a lot of them my friends. Hearing their stories and struggle to tell them was heartbreaking. With that being said, I am incredibly glad we put on the event, and I’m even more glad I was there to support not only my friends but victims of violence on college campuses across America.”

FROM RECRUITMENT PAGE 1

ual chapter finance will be impacted. With Greek chapters having budgets that are pointedly used with lots of consideration, adding a formal recruitment will raise costs for every chapter. When asked about budgeting concerns, Shaw stated, “The Panhellenic Council oversees the recruitment process and chapters will be required to budget based on the council’s policies. Chapters will also be encouraged to reuse materials to help from a cost perspective and reduce waste. All headquarters have been notified of this change and are also prepared to help chapters navigate any challenges that may arise.”

The proposal also details the Impact Assessment as well as Anticipated Risks. Impact Assessment relates to positive impacts that can become prominent within the campus community with this change. These include higher student retention rates, increased GPAs, a greater sense of belonging, increased

opportunities for student leadership, chapter education models and accountability, ease of housing, and the lessening of conflicts during the recruitment process.

Anticipated Risks include health and safety concerns regarding hazing, exclusionary practices with the lack of a Multicultural Greek Council or any National Pan-Hellenic Organization, selective membership, negative feedback from the larger campus community, and finances for new members.

Darain Khan ‘25, current Interfraternity Council President, touched upon some potential drawbacks but also plans on how to combat these risks. “We believe we may face some form of backlash from the larger campus community as this will lead to Fraternity and Sorority Life (FSL) becoming a lot larger as an organization, especially on the fraternity side as the sororities are already quite large. This may lead to FSL being viewed more as traditional Greek organizations on larger campuses and we

may have to do our best to break away from the stereotypes that may prevail but our goal is to ensure that the values that are present in our Greek life continue to persevere.”

With membership in Greek organizations changing, there is the potential for social life to change as well. Khan touched upon this, as well. “Social lives on campus may become more robust as the larger FSL is on campus, the more cross involvement there is between organizations the more potential there is for a better social life on campus. This means that the social life on campus may be impacted even beyond just parties but also in terms of events and such.”

Matan Dolev ‘25, president of Alpha Tau Omega, also emphasized how he sees this as a positive change to Muhlenberg Greek Life as a whole, stating “I see this as a win for Muhlenberg College. Greek life used to be a very prominent aspect here at Berg so seeing strides to revamp our Greek community is nice. More students will be able to

find their groups, and more students will have their back-bone.”

Libby Slovis ‘25, president of Phi Mu, shared these sentiments. “I think that this change will help get first years connected on campus to so many different areas outside of Greek life as well! Many organizations at Muhlenberg partner up with different groups on campus that will help first years expand their circles within the campus community. The change to recruitment will not only be beneficial for first years, but will also enrich the experience, impact, and perspective of our Greek life community as a whole.”

However, reviews from the campus community seem to be a little more mixed. An anonymous sophomore who isn’t Greek affiliated expressed that “It’s going to shift the freshman focus away from academics, slightly.” Similarly, an anonymous sophomore who’s involved in Greek life stated “I’d say it would drive a wedge between everyone on campus.”

An anonymous first-year who’s considering going through recruitment this fall said, “I feel like a lot of first-year second-semester students start to get interested in rushing at that point in the year. I think it’s a good thing for first year students to get involved, especially here at Muhlenberg, as it seems like Greek life has a philanthropic focus. I think it’s gonna open up more opportunities for people who want to get involved, just earlier.”

There is a drastic mixture of opinion on this issue. Students both involved and uninvolved in Greek life have strong thoughts on the topic. It will unmistakably have an impact on the entire Muhlenberg community, and will continue to do so for years to come, as with any large scale transition that morphs the dynamic of the campus.

SGA hosts presidential Q&A, most candidates unopposed

‘Berg headed to the polls last week

By TARA SIMONS
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The SGA presidential Q&A took place on Wednesday, April 17 at 5:30 p.m. The election committee and several students asked a series of questions to the candidate, Vishmitha Dsouza ‘26. Dsouza, first, had two minutes to deliver her opening statement. “I am honored to be running for student body president,” she said, “I believe the privilege of being supported and freely expressing one’s opinion is something that many people do not have and I’m grateful to be on the privileged side...protecting this fundamental right has been integral to me...”

Dsouza is a business and media & communication double major. Her leadership roles on campus include being the vice president of the South Asian Students Association (SASA), treasurer of the International Students Association (ISA) and a representative of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) committee.

The first question from the election committee was, “In what ways do you think the campus can find more ways of connecting and building community amongst each other and what role do you see both SGA and the administration play in fostering that community? Dsouza responded, “I believe to build that sense of community, finding people that you still can find some sense of relatability, is important, and that’s where the affinity groups come into play for

me...I have always felt this great sense of community amongst the affinity groups I’m involved in, but that can look different for a lot of people. A lot of people can find community with people that are completely different from them...I think being able to have that many opportunities and being able to have that many clubs and student resources is important, like SGA, we have been approving dozens of clubs every year...I want to work more on that, even if it’s for one person out there, I think that changes your whole college experience...With administration...as much as they want us to be proactive they also have to listen to us. If we have any feedback, I hope they’re open to working with and listening to us.”

One student asked, “With off campus housing closing, what role do you think SGA plays in the student experience?” Dsouza replied, “...I love the uber college program...I think we need it to be renewed every semester...I also want to open our doors to the Allentown community. Allentown has great restaurants...the only problem is either we don’t have discounts or access to those places...Office of Community engagement is constantly working with that. We have the ride share program, so I would love to work and advance the efforts that they’ve already put in...”

The next question was, “How do you plan on supporting and uplifting the variety of student clubs and organizations as president and what do you see the role of representatives to be in these

efforts?” Dsouza stated, “When Jake Forstein was the recording secretary, he started the club ambassador program...I think that’s a great program...this year we have been trying really hard to bridge that gap and uplift the student clubs, not necessarily how involved they are with student government. So, I think just working on making that better is one of the ways we can enhance what we already have...Another thing that comes to my mind is I want to promote that you can be involved with student government and the campus without being a student government representative. You can have ad-hoc. You just need a student government representative. We have signed up to serve the students. So if we could act more on that there could be more people that are involved in student government.”

The next question was, “How do you intend to prepare working with administration in ways that are productive and solution-oriented?” She responded, “One thing I learned this year from Bridging the Gap, this leadership program... is to hear to listen, but not respond...I want to actually listen and that’s what I would expect the administration to do as well...listening to what they are doing and then bringing it back to my e-board and then putting together a solution that we think is more viable for student’s interests and then going back and talking to the administration about it... We find a middle ground where we are not completely radical opposites...I’m not here to stand

PHOTO COURTESY OF SABEEN SAFI.



Sabeen Safi ‘26, Student Government Association’s Vice President-elect for the 2024-2025 academic year.



Vish Dsouza ‘26, Student Government Association’s President-elect for the 2024-2025 academic year.

against anyone...but rather work towards something that we both can achieve.”

The next question was, “Of all four of SGA’s committees, DEIB is the newest with only being on SGA for a total of three years now. How do you see the role of the SGA’s DEIB committee continuing to adapt to the campus needs?” She responded “DEIB should be reflective in every initiative taken by SGA, it’s not a job it’s a responsibility, and we all need to take that responsibility,” she said. “I hope we achieve a day when we don’t have events that are just put out by the DEIB committee...but rather we just have it in a way that is reflective of every aspect of SGA.”

The last question from the election committee was, “The role of president is to serve as a leader, not only on the executive board, but for the entire student government. In one word, what is one skill that you believe best encapsulates your ability to serve as a leader and how have you cultivated this skill throughout your other leadership experiences?” Dsouza responded, “The one word is collaborative... my other leadership experience on campus include being a resident advisor, that whole job is based on collaboration. You collaborate with your residents all the time, you collaborate with housing, you collaborate with

admissions...My other leadership on campus has also been very strong with collaboration... With ISA we collaborated with affinity and non-affinity groups... even my classes, I have a lot of group projects in my classes, so you need collaboration there too...I have learned collaboration throughout my life in the small and big groups I’ve been a part of. And one thing I have learned is that talking to and talking at your people are very different things. I would like to be a person who talks to my peers rather than talking at them as a president.”

Dsouza and Sabeen Safi ‘26 won the elections for president and vice-president, respectively. Both races were uncontested. Jay Khoury ‘26, who also ran uncontested, won Treasurer. AJ Ring ‘26, Teigan Brown ‘25, Jimmy Kaba ‘26 and Josephine Glass ‘27 won the remaining E-board positions of Recording Secretary, Director of Communications, Campus Engagement Chair and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Chair, respectively.

FROM FACULTY PAGE 1

including offerings in machine learning and cybersecurity, to enhance the breadth of knowledge available to our computer science students,” said Podder.

In the Jewish studies program, Associate Professor Jessica Cooperman, Ph.D., is leaving the role of department chair of religion studies and director of the Jewish studies program. Re-

placing her is Associate Professor of Religion Studies Dustin Nash, Ph.D. “Having served as both a department chair and director of Jewish Studies– a dual role that will now be taken over by Prof. Nash– meant that I have lots of varied professional experience, in addition to teaching, which was appealing to other institutions, and will be very helpful in a new position,” said

Cooperman.

Many of the faculty members who remain at the College are now taking on roles that require them to go on course release. This means that while they may still work at Muhlenberg, perhaps in an administrative role, they no longer teach a full load of three courses. Thus, while these faculty members leaving may not seem that substantial of

a change, the shifting of faculty members to upper-level positions has also led to a decrease in classes offered in certain departments.

With the introduction of Muhlenberg’s new curriculum, which comes with a different set of course designations, how will these changes be affected by the faculty turnover rate? This new set of class requirements in-

cludes categories such as Meaning and Value; Humans, Histories, and Social Structures and Race and Power in the American Experience. Is now an effective time to introduce a reconstructed curriculum when departments are already struggling to fill classes and find instructors for courses?



THE MUHLENBERG WEEKLY

ARTS & CULTURE

“Art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time.”

-Thomas Merton

PHOTO COURTESY OF KERRY KAUFMAN '24.

Senior spotlight: Kerry Kaufman '24

By EMMA HOWSON
STAFF WRITER

Kerry Kaufman '24 has been dancing ever since his legs were strong enough to carry him, but his passion for the craft has never dimmed. “I dance and create choreography,” he said, “and I started dancing when I was two years old.”

“Starting [with] ballet and tap classes... I grew up dancing in private studios. As I got older, I was able to broaden the genres of dance I was learning to include jazz, hip-hop, breaking and contemporary styles. I also participated in competitive dance from middle school through the end of high school. I seriously dislike the value of competition being tied to the art of dance, however, I stuck with it because I saw dance competitions as performance opportunities, and I have always loved dancing on stage and for other people.”

Kaufman was forever changed as an artist when he came to college. “Since coming to Muhlenberg, I have had multiple opportunities to perform in student and faculty-choreographed productions along with choreographing

for one myself. I feel I have almost completely reinvented myself as an artist here... I think I have been able to uncover the artist I knew I could be. I have always appreciated the artistry within dance over the novelty of pure physical ability, and I feel that my education here has nurtured this appreciation.” Additionally, Muhlenberg has provided a place where Kaufman can truly be himself. “... as a transgender dancer in a body that doesn't align with the stereotypical ‘dancer's body,’ I have felt my artistry has been valued over just my physicality which has really allowed me to explore and grow into myself as a dancer and artist.”

The biggest change for Kaufman since coming to college is probably the discovery of his affinity for choreography, as previously he had only been a performer. “Hands down, my favorite artistic experience in college has been choreographing for ‘Reset: New Dances '23’ this past fall semester. It was my first time choreographing [for] a group of people, and as nervous as I felt going into the process, I ended up creating something I'm

really proud of. The piece, ‘Disclosing Integration,’ is about my experience accepting my trans identity, so it's quite personal. Getting to share that process with dancers who are also friends of mine was quite fulfilling; I felt incredibly supported, and I felt safe enough to create the work that I felt I needed to make at the time.”

One aspect of that support has come from Kaufman's professors. “While all the professors I've worked with have had an impact on me and my art, I'll identify Robyn Watson [director of the co-curriculum for theatre & dance] as a professor who has been particularly supportive and influential both generally and in an artistic context. I try to let my intuition guide my artistic choices, and throughout ‘Reset '23,’ [Watson] really encouraged me to follow that impulse. Her support helped me eliminate the self-doubt I had around my process and choreographic abilities, and allowed me to go further with my artistic expression.”

Of course, this road hasn't always been easy. “I feel like I am constant-

ly dealing with chronic injuries!” Kaufman said. But he hasn't let these setbacks dampen his creative drive. “Over the years, I've had to learn how to take care of my body in both a reactionary and preventative way. Being able to modify movement to cater to my current physical abilities is definitely a skill that I have been fine-tuning. I have also learned how important warming up adequately and practicing strength conditioning is to prevent injury and improve my craft.”

Even though graduation is just on the horizon, Kaufman isn't about to slow down. “I am currently serving as the associate artistic director for the theatre & dance department's ‘Spring Studio Sessions,’ under the artistic direction of [Visiting Assistant Professor] Elizabeth Bergman [Ph.D.] which premieres on May 1 at 7:00 p.m.!” And even though his plans for the future aren't set in stone, he's looking forward to the opportunities that he can pursue after graduation. “...I'm planning on working at home to save money for a while and investing time into taking



Kerry Kaufman '24 has been involved in several dance performances at Muhlenberg, including “Reset: New Dances '23.”

dance classes in NYC consistently. While I'm open to the possibilities, and don't really know where the future will take me, my longer-term plans include moving to NYC to pursue a career in dance and choreography, and to further my dance training and education.”

Finally, Kaufman has some advice for other artists, especially those who are still trying to find themselves: “Work through any fear of being vulnerable with yourself; if you can be honest with yourself, you can be hon-

est and authentic in your art.”

You can see Spring Studio Sessions next week, May 1-3.

2024 Commencement Luncheon



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“Head Over Heels” opened on April 18.

“Head Over Heels” has electric debut at Muhlenberg

By JOHNNY VEGLIA
MANAGING EDITOR

Lights, dancing, The Go-Go’s music, fun and queer iconography delighted audiences this past weekend with the theatre and dance department’s production of “Head Over Heels.” The jukebox musical performed in the Baker Theatre after months of rehearsals and various changes throughout the production process.

Alessandra Fanelli, office manager & admissions coordinator of the Theatre and Dance Department, helmed the process as the director of the piece and utilized support systems as this was her first time directing. “I was given the unique opportunity to direct while also working as a theatre & dance staff member, which certainly presented challenges. I am extremely grateful that I have had this experience as it was my first time directing in this capacity,” stated Fanelli.

Leanna Niesen ‘24 worked closely with Fanelli, and the rest of the production team, as the production stage manager of the show. “We had a lot of ups and downs but I couldn’t be prouder of the way the cast and team came together to make it happen,” stated Niesen. “It ended up being a very collaborative process where all voices were valued, and I think you could see that in the performances.”

The collaborative dynamics of the space were carefully crafted to make sure people felt com-

fortable with the process and with each other. Fanelli said, “Seeing an extension of what I believed to be true in collaboration with the vision of my colleagues and team working on this show was one of if not the most special experiences I have had in theatre-making. I cannot stress enough the importance of self-care practice in the arts and how important it is to take care of the humans you are creating with.”

Chloe Zurkan ‘24, who portrayed Basilus, the monarch of Arcadia, discussed how this support from Fanelli influenced their performance and experiences in the show. “I found that a lot of the joy and connection within the cast and crew actually came from the hardest things that we had to face,” stated Zurkan. “Having our director, Allie Fanelli, join us mid-process was such a blessing, and she really allowed our cast to bond in an incredibly special way.”

This support and fun dynamics were celebrated with spirit days and additional initiatives to bring the ensemble together. Rehearsals would also begin with a check-in question of various levels to see how everyone was doing. “It was really important to me that efforts were made to build community, which we also aimed to do by gathering folks for dinner and watching The Go-Go’s documentary, and the spirit days – but I think community is built only with willing participants and that leaders have a

responsibility to explain why it’s important to make that investment,” said Fanelli. “If there is no trust in a process, the end product suffers.”

Niesen mentioned, “It was great to see audiences responding and celebrating with us!” These dynamics amongst the cast and crew transcended to the stage as the piece was electric and the joy within the ensemble could be felt amongst the audience.

Lauren Block ‘26 shared, “I thought the show was really good, it was obvious that so much work had gone into the performance, the costumes especially were so pretty.”

“The energy from the audience was amazing. The energy between cast and crew was palpable. Everyone wanted to see everyone shine, and you could feel that both on-stage and off-stage,” stated Zurkan.

“Towards the end of the process I think we all realized just how much fun we could have with this show. Every show was practically sold out and from what I’ve heard people really enjoyed it. There’s not really much more you could ask for,” expressed Luke McIntyre ‘25, who played Musidorus in the musical.

With this energy, the performance felt like a celebration and audience members showcased their support by applauding for exciting moments and characters, such as Tommy Kelly’s ‘24 Pythio/Oracle. This electric feeling was also established with

the exciting elements of the production, from lavish Elizabethan costumes to the hidden queer easter eggs in the props. Although the vision of the show was changed halfway through the production process, it was not apparent in the final product.

Zurkan concluded, “It’s no secret that each individual involved in ‘Head Over Heels’ put in a tremendous amount of work and effort to make this show

happen and I am truly astounded by their work every single day. Our family of artists made ‘Head Over Heels’ the fabulous production that it was: hilarious, dramatic and heartfelt. I get emotional when thinking about the bonds that I made with the cast and crew because it was an experience unlike any other and I want to thank each and every person involved for being the reason that was possible.”

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A celebration of Arab culture at Muhlenberg

By SINHAYANA SRINIVASAN
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

PHOTO COURTESY OF SINHAYANA SRINIVASAN '26.

The Arab American Heritage Month is a time to celebrate Arab American culture and how they have contributed to the US through their hard work and dedication to diversity. The Middle Eastern Student Association (MESA) held an Arab Heritage Festival, which beautifully showcased the different aspects of Arab-American culture.

Held on the Fahy Commons lawn last Saturday, April 20, from 7 to 11 p.m., the festival included everything from a shawarma station to henna and traditional Dabke dance. The MESA E-board put a lot of effort into the planning and organization of the event and spoke about how it was a team effort to pull everything off. This event has been in the works for more than three months, since January, and was their biggest event since the start of MESA. The MESA e-board said, "The planning consisted of long meetings, hundreds of text messages and thousands of phone calls but it was all worth it!"

They had to collaborate and involve a lot of different departments and faculty of Muhlenberg such as Sodexo, for their amazing catering, the Office of Multicultural Life, Dean of Students Allison Williams and the Student Government Association (SGA). One of their most popular attractions was the henna station, run by Sophie (whose professional name is Henna Chakra), and her designs were



Muhlenberg students participate in a Dabke dance at the Arab Heritage Festival.

extremely popular amongst the visitors. The event was high-spirited and upbeat with DJ Soma to thank for the wonderful and lively Arab music he played. The music got everyone dancing and moving to the songs.

Sana Nauman '26 mentioned how the event was "carefully and greatly designed—such as reserving the parking lot, the great food, the Dabke group, the henna and just keeping the vibes going." It fostered a great sense of community amongst everyone and showed how a different language or different culture does not necessarily instill division in the community. The Vice President of MESA, Zayna Shahid '27, mentioned how, "The festival was truly an amazing experience. The energy of everyone together was beautiful and it really showed how cultural events can bring people closer together as a community."

One of the main highlights of

the festival was the performance by a professional Dabke group called the Al-Dal'ouna Dabka Team. They set up an amazing performance that all left us speechless. Dabke dance is a traditional Palestinian dance that consists of dancing in a circle at joyous occasions. The Al-Dal'ouna Dabka team are a group of friends who grew up together and share a common sentiment of showing people who are not familiar with their culture what it is and spreading the word about Arab Heritage Month. They stated how, "We want people to know that we come from a welcoming and friendly culture and that we accept everybody and just want to share our culture and traditions with the rest of the world."

The food was also a huge hit, with there being a shawarma food truck with both chicken and vegetarian options. Sodexo also provided pita chips with

hummus, stuffed grape leaves, cupcakes and baklava. Everyone loved the food and there was a big line for the delicious shawarmas. Pamela Najm '27, the president of MESA, said, "My favorite part was teaching my friends and people from the community how to do Dabke, which is a Levantine folk dance. I loved having the opportunity to not only highlight Arab culture, but also share my love for the Middle East's food, music, dance and traditions!"

The community of people from different backgrounds doing the Dabke dance and learning from each other was amazing to watch. Angela Mamari '26, who identifies as Arab, said, "As someone who had such a loving Arab community growing up it was kind of a big shock going to come to a school where I felt there wasn't much of one. My first semester it was almost like there were so many of us yet we

didn't have a place to come together. I definitely feel as though the festival was a good representation of our culture and allowed us to really share it with the rest of our community at Muhlenberg."

Overall, this festival was a huge success and wonderfully showcased what Arab culture is all about. Shobha Pai '24, commented, "I loved the Dabke dancing, it really showed how community-based the culture is and being taught the dance made me feel a part of the culture and showed me how I can celebrate someone else's traditions with them."

This event helped bridge the gap between many different backgrounds and identities and fostered a sense of belonging for both Arab Americans and everyone else. MESA hopes to continue hosting great festivals like this in the future, and that more aspects of Arab culture are visible at Muhlenberg. Especially because Muhlenberg is a Predominantly White Institution (PWI), having festivals such as this which help educate and inform those of the campus community about global traditions and different countries is really important. Sabeen Safi '26, the SGA ambassador for MESA, was really excited about the festival and said, "Seeing everyone engaged in the culture at the festival was truly so fun and I'm excited to see the growth of this event next year!"



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Disclose and divest

A letter to Muhlenberg’s administration

By SHAJNIN HOWLADER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

To the administration of Muhlenberg College,

We, the undersigned students and community members of Muhlenberg College, demand ethical investment practices for our institution’s \$308+ million endowment. We call for transparency from the Muhlenberg Investment Office regarding companies funded by our endowment and urge divestment from entities operating in Israel. Additionally, we advocate for an end to programs that normalize relations with Israel.

The actions of the state of Israel have resulted in the deaths of over 30,000 Palestinians, including over 12,000 children, and the displacement of over 1 million Palestinians. The Israeli occupation has been accused of committing war crimes, including the use of illegal weapons and targeting safe zones. The International Court of Justice has raised concerns about possible genocide, and Human Rights Watch has criticized Israel’s restriction of aid to Gaza.

Referencing President Haring’s Earth Day email titled “Leading by Example in Campus Sustainability,” she states, “Our institutional values commit us to being good citizens of the Earth, and to making institu-

tional decisions that are mindful of our complex relations with the ecosystem. I am proud of our community for recognizing this need and actively engaging in partnerships that contribute to a better future for all.”

To this, we respond, how is funding and normalizing relations to the genocidal state of Israel which is actively bombing neighborhoods, hospitals, UN buildings, Aid vehicles, and depriving an entire population of Palestinians the right to food, water, and aid, sustainable in any form. Is this how we celebrate Earth day?

The Muhlenberg community will do everything in its power to help end this violence and the occupation of Palestine. This petition ignites the BDS (boycott, divest, sanction) campaign against Israel here at Muhlenberg College. BDS is a strategic movement that began in the 1980s to end apartheid in South Africa. This movement began on college campuses, with students just like us demanding that their institutions invest ethically. By the time apartheid ended in 1988, 150 US universities had divested from companies operating in South Africa. With funds withdrawn on a large scale, the apartheid former South African regime was made to understand that their violent practices were not acceptable. This lead to the

collapse of apartheid, election of Nelson Mandela, and a brighter future for millions of South Africans.

In 2002, in light of the end of former South African apartheid, anti-apartheid activist and Nobel Prize recipient Desmond Tutu wrote that “There is no greater testament to the basic dignity of ordinary people everywhere than the divestment movement of the 1980s,” and that “a similar movement has taken shape recently, this time aiming at an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories. We should hope that average citizens again rise to the occasion...” We know that Israel depends on American financial support to carry out their crimes. Israel already receives billions from the US Government - it shall not receive a penny more from Muhlenberg College. As Nelson Mandela famously stated, “we know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians.”

Today, as members of the Muhlenberg College community, we refuse to remain silent while our institution continues to align itself with the far-right genocidal government of Israel. We are committed to taking action to address these issues.

Until our demands are fulfilled, Muhlenberg Alumni pledge to withhold ALL dona-

tions and all forms of support to the college.

We want to know where our money is going, and assurance that our money is not funding a genocide.

We are committed to taking action to address these issues. Our demands include:

1. **ISSUE A STATEMENT:** that (a) calls for a ceasefire; (b) recognizes the actions of Israel as a U.S.-funded genocide, rather than a “conflict,” which infers symmetrical claim, power and aggression; (c) contextualizes the violence and recognizes the 75 years of settler-colonial violence that preceded October 7th; (d) explicitly condemns the Israeli regime.
2. **END PRO-ISRAEL PRO-GRAMMING:** Muhlenberg-supported programs such as Israeli study abroad and birthright, and yearly instated Israeli Fellowships which normalize relations with a far-right, settler-colonial, and genocidal state. Muhlenberg College does not have such relations with other states that perpetuate large-scale violence against civilians, such as Russia.

These programs must end, in line with the BDS movement.

3. **PUBLICIZE MUHLENBERG’S INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO:** A core tenant of the Muhlenberg Endowment is to uphold university values and morals. The values of the college are determined by the community which inhabits its campus. To ensure accountability, the actions taken by the Investment Office must be transparent to that community. We demand that the list of companies and all other entities supported by our endowment is included in all future Endowment Reports.
4. **DIVEST** from all entities (including but not limited to governments, companies, NGOs, and individuals) directly operating in collaboration with the Israeli government. This includes tech companies such as HP, Lockheed Martin, and Black-Rock which has directly aided Israel in providing weapon manufacturing, AI, and bombs that have killed more than 30,000 Palestinians since October 7. This does not include the MIL-LIONS prior to October 7.



Who was there to hear?

By KATHERINE CONLON
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

If someone had told me on my first day of college in August of 2020 that I would be the editor of the school paper, I would’ve said, “Who are you and why are you just predicting my random life achievements?” When former news editor, Sophie Sarnitsky, suggested via Zoom that I should write for the paper, I reluctantly agreed; thinking that this could be something to get me out of the COVID bubble I’d been in for almost a full year. Four years and over 50 articles later, I can say that I made the right decision by saying “yes” to Sophie’s offer. The Weekly has provided me with opportunities and community that would not have been available to me otherwise. As a commuter student (lol yes I’m bringing this up in the senior op-ed), it can be hard to develop a core group of people you connect with. The Weekly is the ultimate connector. After all, if you don’t become close with the people you pull all-nighters with editing the paper, then what are you doing?

Now for the thank-yous, and there are many, so prepare yourself. My mom is a journalist (way better than me) and the picture of hard-work and resilience. When she was laid off in 2022, she turned this disappointment, hurt and confusion into opportunity, taking on freelance roles

at several publications and establishing annual “best-of” stories that will continue long after she retires. My two best friends from home, Katie and Court, are my foundation and support system. Katie, who I’ve known for my entire life, reignites childhood bliss. Court’s seen me at my lowest and still voices their love for me; they let me retell the same story over and over and never once tell me to stop. I couldn’t have gotten through college without them. And now on to my Weekly family. My FYS OG bestie, Johnny, never fails to make me laugh to the point of “peeing my pants.” Sarah oozes genuine kindness; I’ve never seen someone sparkle more than her when someone brings up rom-coms. Ally is our former news editor, a close friend and author of the ‘Berg New Works’ production “-in-chief.” Ally, no one has mastered prose quite like you. The world you built in “-in-chief” left me awe-struck, inspired and incredibly grateful. I can’t wait to be sitting in the audience when one of your plays makes it to Broadway. Cydney, The Weekly’s former editor-in-chief, with a three-year tenure, is truly one the most remarkable human beings I have ever met. I can only hope to have emulated a fraction of her intelligence, tenacity and curiosity. I mail her a copy of every issue, and I always look forward to slipping the letter through the mail

slot, knowing that she’ll get to read our work. Sara Vigneri has been an incredibly supportive mentor and advisor. Navigating this year has not been easy, and she has provided us with invaluable advice and support. She perfectly balances caring about her students with letting them make decisions independent from institutional approval.

Readers, next semester, you are in for an incredible editorial board, ready to provide you with important student-led journalism. Keanna Peña, your future editor-in-chief, is equipped with a strong sense of self, a social justice-oriented mentality and an insatiable desire to unveil the truth. You are all so very lucky to have her leading this organization. Shinam Hussain will be your managing editor along with Matthew Baresh. I could not think of a more level-headed and articulate pair to take on these roles. Harry Glicklin will remain your stead-fast copy editor. He never fails to keep us all grounded and catch a pesky Oxford comma. This group along with all of our other editors are going to make a great team, and I’m so excited to see what they do.

Before I say my final goodbye I want to emphasize one of the key lessons that my time at The Weekly has taught me. No institution is perfect and this includes Muhlenberg. Just in this year alone, the College has forcefully put a tenured pro-



PHOTO BY ALEX MCCAULEY ‘26.

Editor-in-Chief Katherine Conlon ‘24 in the Weekly office.

fessor on leave, with no explanation. This kind of unchecked administrative action is frightening, and brings about a troubling question: How far can our institutions go before experiencing enough pushback to stop? This was also visible when the College allowed radical Republican politician Dave McCormick to film his campaign commercial for Senate in Memorial Hall. This lack of transparency is exactly why we need student journalists. Journalism can’t happen without questioning the systems that you are a part of.

Throughout my time at Muhlenberg, I’ve fielded many questions and complaints about the work The Weekly does. “No one reads The Weekly” or “We have a school paper?” are phrases I’ve heard many times from

my peers. This is where the title of my piece comes into play. “Who was there to hear?” is a lyric from Joni Mitchell’s “Same Situation.” In this song, she details crying out to higher power, feeling as if no one is listening to her. Sometimes, leading this organization makes me feel like Joni in this song; crying out, wondering who’s even reading and appreciating the work we create. However, knowing that our organization is part of a greater, century-plus long legacy makes our efforts to provide our campus with vital information all the more meaningful. All I can hope is that my year as editor made some sort of mark on our campus community, regardless of how small.

The spinning rainbow wheel of life

By SARAH WEDEKING
MANAGING EDITOR

1:24 a.m. My eyes are weary, drunk on blue light from the computer. I've been laying out the newspaper's design for almost seven hours straight, the Mac computer full of opened Google docs, downloaded files and one essential InDesign page. As I make my changes to the page, the computer freezes up. A rainbow circle, the "Rainbow Wheel of Death" loads on the screen. Then the computer goes black.

I've lost some of my progress once InDesign opens again, and I scowl at the screen, groaning in frustration—time to start again. I was a layout editor at The Weekly for most of my time, becoming a managing editor for my last semester. Late nights of greasy GQ food, laughter, red pen markings and text boxes were a staple of my four years. And I'm not sure what I will do when the rainbow wheel spins again, when the screen finally goes black, never to restart again.

In other words, I'm going to

miss The Weekly. I remember joining on a zoom screen in my Brown dorm, my feet dangling from the bed. When we finally had our first production, I was exhausted walking back at 3 a.m. But as I look back, those were the best times of my college life. Not only to be a part of such a warm-hearted, funny community but one that was passionate about journalism and making a difference. I'll remember Johnny's spectacles, Sara looking at me like a face looking at the camera in "The Office," whenever Katie says something weird, the constant fights over the Oxford comma.

I want to shout out some of the best people I've ever known: Cydney Wilson, thank you for hopping on that prospective Zoom call and telling me about The Weekly. Your passion and intelligence know no bounds, and 'Berg is never the same without you. Or-El Ankori, and all of the other layout editors who've come and gone - those late nights of wanting to murder InDesign, coupled with funny memes and "Kim Possible" ringtones, are memories I will trea-

sure forever. Harry Glicklin and Keanna Peña: you're so cool and I know you're gonna do so well with The Weekly once us seniors are gone. My editor team: Katherine Conlon and Johnny Veglia - I'm consistently delighted by your dedication to both the Weekly and off-key karaoke sessions of "Wicked" songs. Johnny, you're truly one of a kind and every time I see you, you always bring both a smile and at times, laughter so hard I can't breathe. Katie, thank you so much for believing in me - your love of Joni Mitchell, going against-the-grain journalism, and awesomeness always amaze me. I love both of you and I will continue to remember your sitcom couple dynamic for years to come.

And finally, thank you Sara Vigneri. Even though we'll always be at an impasse (your name spelled incorrectly without an h), I have learned so much from you.

I love our late-night conversations about first-year seminars, books and sci-fi movies. My time working for "The Allentown Voice," is something I'm incredibly proud of, but I'm even



Managing Editor Sarah Wedeking '24 in the Weekly office.

more so proud to have known you these past four years. As you read this, I hope you have a nice cup of coffee and are enjoying the time without the constant-Taylor Swift playing in the background.

1:25 am. The rainbow wheel has stopped spinning, prompting the screen to restart. It's the same software, but the content is different, the words new

and exciting. As I enter my next chapter (such a cliché thing), I hope that I imagine my struggles as that rainbow wheel, loading. The screen will turn black, but it signifies a new start, not as a rainbow wheel of death, but of my next stage in life.

The death of undergrad

By JOHNNY VEGLIA
MANAGING EDITOR

It is hard to believe that this is my last campus voice ever, and with that, everyone cheered. I am so incredibly grateful for The Muhlenberg Weekly and how it has been there for me throughout my four years at 'Berg. First-year was not easy, especially with a global pandemic, but I vividly remember attending the virtual club fair where I decided to join The Weekly Zoom call. I met with Kat Dickey, who greeted me with their lovely bedroom background, complete with a "Thor: Ragnarok" (2017) poster hanging on the wall. From there, I started writing and, before I knew it, Danny Milkis asked me to join as editorial staff during the end of my first spring semester. I vividly remember being caught off guard by this question and I was nervous about the decision to join leadership or not, but I am so thankful I did. It is the best decision I ever made at Muhlenberg and it has led me to meet some of the most intelligent, dedicated and inspirational people on this campus.

One of these people is my work wife Katie Conlon, who has

only blossomed in her role as editor-in-chief and has been an inspiration for all of us. It has been a pleasure to work with both Sarah Wedeking and Keanna Peña, my wonderful fellow managing editors this year. Sarah is such a positive light and I am extremely appreciative of the grand reactions to my terrible jokes. Keanna is such an incredible writer and I am so thankful to have worked with her in multiple capacities. I look forward to her incredible work as editor-in-chief. Harry Glicklin has also been a great support system as copy editor and I am sorry for all the annoying questions, especially if glasswork should be one or two words. These are just some of the wonderful people I have worked with in my position of managing editor this past year.

I will always be thankful for the work of Cydney Wilson, one of the most brilliant people I know, and how she supported me with both the paper and as a peer. Cydney also put up with my delirious performances in the office, along with Ally Duvak, Mustafa Hall and countless others. Ally has been such a wonderful friend both in the office and out and it was an incredible feat

to watch "in-chief" this spring. I look forward to the continuation of the work of Muhlenberg's very own Paula Vogel. Mustafa is an incredible person and I miss our banter so much. During my reign of the aux, I would play my latest music obsession in the office and gracefully listen to Mustafa's opinions. I also could not go on without mentioning the one and only, Sara Vigneri. Sara has been such an incredible role model and I am honestly shocked she likes me, or does a decent job at pretending she does. I miss our adventures in Ireland, especially when we went crazy at The Bernard Shaw pub in Dublin 9.

It is honestly hard to believe that I will never write in this paper again and I am going to miss the sheer chaos of it all. I remember during my sophomore year when the Boundless letters were first displayed on the college green. Someone posted a picture of them in our Weekly GroupMe and we made countless jokes about someone switching around the letters or stealing them. Then later that night, I went to a comedy show in Seegers Union with a friend and as soon as I exited Seegers, I was greeted with a lovely surprise.



Managing Editor Johnny Veglia '24 reads a copy of the Weekly on Chew St.

The letters now read "Nude-slobs" since someone arranged them in the somber hours of the moonlight. I grabbed a selfie, as one does when there are giant letters rearranged on public greenery, and then I sent it to our GroupMe right away. Laughs galore and jokes were spewed, but Sara thought I actually did it. The running "rumor" was that the administration would think Sara bribed me into rearranging the letters as a crude prank. Cydney had to prove my innocence and that it was just a joke, but it was an infamous moment nonetheless. It also shows the power of misinformation, see how it

all comes full circle? It's a challenge, but it's so important to think critically in situations as they unfold. I am most appreciative of this paper for helping me realize the importance of the source and how "unbiased" is really just a myth.

I look forward to the amazing work of The Muhlenberg Weekly in the future and I hope that this community only becomes more invested in the diligent work of this organization. The Muhlenberg Weekly has always been there for me, and I am glad to know it always will be. ROLL WEEKLY!

Why the Makerspace matters

By KIRA BRETSKY
PHOTO EDITOR

At the beginning of April, I was given an assignment in my history class that has reshaped my daily life at Muhlenberg and my identity as a student.

The initial assignment was open-ended; a common project

concept in humanities studies. The "unessay" is a prompt that many students in the liberal arts are familiar with. As a final for the class, I was given creative freedom to learn and build a representation of a deeper study into topics discussed in Revolutionary America. I knew almost immediately that I wanted to

play to my strengths and sew a flag. It is a quilted version of the original American flag, with 13 stars forming a circle in the field to represent the 13 colonies.

The Muhlenberg Makerspace, located on the ground floor of Fahy Commons, has a simple Singer sewing machine. I showed up at the door the day

after I received the assignment with absolutely zero resources, a half-baked vision and a bit of sewing experience (thank you, Grandma Sylvia).

The first person I talked to at the Makerspace was technician Ren Anan. He looked at me a little sideways but without a hint of judgment when I asked to dig

through all of the fabrics and clothes that had been donated to the Makerspace. I spent about 20 minutes setting aside anything red, white and blue that I thought would work for my project. Without any context, Ren was intrigued by my endeavors

[SEE MAKERSPACE PAGE 10](#)

Hail and Farewell

By OLIVIA OBERMAN
SPORTS EDITOR

There is a unique and special passion required to be a college athlete.

It is nearly impossible for any student to stay dedicated to their sport through the impressionable, busy and sacrificial, four-plus years of college without a deep spark lit inside of them. This passion is often sparked in early childhood and high school careers, where training and competing in sports becomes an interest. At some point, there were family members, close friends, and or coaches who gave you the confidence to turn your sport into an undetachable part of your identity. The vision may eventually become taking your hard work to the collegiate level, regardless of knowing where that would be—just wanting it to be somewhere.

Soon enough, you are there. It is an indescribable feeling arriving at college not knowing where your sport will take you, what teammates you will have, how your coaches will inspire you, and in what ways your commitments will shape you into the person you will become.

A “Hail and Farewell” is a military tradition of honoring individuals who are leaving and welcoming those who are arriving. As the athletic careers of many senior athletes come to an end at Muhlenberg, this article aims to serve as something similar. Many of those seniors have shared how they have grown from their time here and have offered advice to incoming freshmen athletes who are just about to embark on their own, special journeys as Mules.

“Something I learned about myself at Muhlenberg is that

I can do anything I want to do and accomplish. I never thought I would have experienced or accomplished many of the things I have in my time here, like winning a conference championship. Find joy in everything you do, whether at practice, games or outside of your sport. At the end of the day, it’s about having fun for the next four years and creating lifelong relationships.” adds softball player Raya Kunes ‘24, who was a part of the 2022 Centennial Championship team.

“Try to enjoy every practice, practices are often challenging but that allows you to get better and they happen almost every day, if you can enjoy them, then you’d have 6 days a week doing something you enjoy,” says Josh Benson ‘24, captain of the tennis team.

“As the days and weeks go by, you come to appreciate them more than you ever did,” adds, two-year captain for the baseball team, Jonathan Toth ‘24.

“Stay committed and stay determined,” says Ryan May ‘24, senior captain of the men’s lacrosse team. “If your career does not start the way you planned or your commitments don’t seem to pay off immediately, don’t get down on yourself. Stay focused and work to change your approach instead. When opportunities come, take advantage of them. College athletics has taught me how to be comfortable in high-pressure situations and in handling many types of adversity.”

Women’s soccer player and editor for the Muhlenberg Weekly, Lexi Sipos ‘24, adds, “For the incoming freshman athletes, my best advice would be to stay present. College is going to challenge you academically, physi-

cally, socially and more. It can be overwhelming, but try your best to live in the moment and enjoy every game, practice, team bonding event and more. Life is too short not too. From my athletic career at Muhlenberg, I learned personally that you are truly capable of anything you put your mind to. With injuries or adversity, you can come out stronger than ever. The comeback is always stronger than the setback, and this translates into real-life experiences too. Athletics truly set you up for success in the real world, and for that, I am truly grateful.”

Golfer Aron Gianchandani ‘24 states, “Know the fine line between student and athlete.”

Toth builds on this, “During my athletic career at Muhlenberg, I was able to learn how to balance my athletic, academic and personal responsibilities that I will be able to bring into the real world.”

Student-athletes are asked to challenge themselves every day. The outcome of this is immense growth.

Former captain of the football team, Zachary Greenberg ‘24, will be furthering his athletic career at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill next year. He touches on his career at Muhlenberg, “Having the opportunity to play for such an elite program and brotherhood, striving to be a better man than you were yesterday is what sets Muhlenberg apart from the other teams in the Centennial Conference. Entering this program will give you the unique opportunity to make an impact on and off the field and reach immense amounts of growth. It’s all about the process. Where you start day one will be nowhere near where

you finish after your four years are up. No matter what form of adversity presents itself, attack it with a never-give-up or allow-defeat mentality, and you will reach levels of success you never knew were possible. After my four years, I have been fortunate enough to learn what it takes to be successful on the field and in the classroom. It is simply caring more than your opponent and doing the work, and extra work it takes to be amongst the great.”

Captain of both the track and cross country teams and staff writer for The Weekly, Caitlin Kinnear ‘24, says, “Don’t limit yourself! Set high goals, remember that you’re capable of more than you think and you shouldn’t be afraid to push yourself. I’ve learned how to use hard days as motivation. Not every practice or track meet is going to go well but the times they haven’t have led me to be grateful for the times they have and to dwell on what I can do, not on what I can’t.”

“You are a vital and crucial asset to your team no matter your role. Embrace whatever cards you are dealt and don’t overthink anything too heavily. A four-year athletic commitment is made out of the love for our sport, so focus on that passion if or when times get hard. Collegiate-level athletics taught me that adversity can not stop someone who perseveres,” claims Elisabeth Loiselle ‘24, defender on the women’s lacrosse team and contributing writer to The Weekly.

Captain of the men’s basketball team, Brandon Goldberg ‘24 states, “My biggest advice to incoming freshman is to not take every day for granted. I remember when I was a freshman when

the seniors were telling me that ‘time goes by fast’, and I didn’t believe them. And now here I am graduating in less than a month, and I can’t believe how quickly it’s gone by. So leave it all out on the field or court when you play”

Greenberg summarizes things succinctly, “None of our successes would be possible without the constant support we are fortunate enough to experience from our athletic department, athletic trainers, coaches, faculty and staff. It is a result of the hard work and dedication they give us daily that truly allows us to excel. A simple thank you wouldn’t nearly do the justice these extraordinary people deserve, but it is due to them that we have been able to compete and grow at such an extraordinary institution as Muhlenberg. Being a college athlete is extremely rare, and a huge accomplishment on its own, and being able to capitalize on any opportunities given to you will allow you to create a legacy, and continue to build on your own, personal story.”

So, soon enough you are there, and soon enough you are done.

For that reason and all of the above advice, it means the most, to make the most of your time. It is an incredible honor to be able to play college sports. Take it all in.

FROM **MAKERSPACE** PAGE 9

and I excitedly explained to him my concept. He let me know how each piece of fabric had made its way to the space, which ended up being a crucial element to my project: by using all recycled materials, my flag could represent the resourcefulness of women and textile workers during non-importation acts in the 18th century.

The second time I visited the Makerspace, I talked to Eric Schwartz (known to some students as “Agent E,” for reasons that are worth learning about), the other technician who runs the shop. He and Visiting Professor Greg Heller-LaBelle directed me to the sewing machine and its corresponding materials (pins, bobbins, thread, etc). I fully expected them to mansplain the sewing machine to me. As a woman, I have rarely found myself in engineering and innovation settings where I have not experienced condescending tones and unwarranted explanations. I find that this is a universal circumstance for women across all disciplines. So when Ren, Eric and Greg were interested only in my success and not their knowledge, I was genuinely surprised and grateful.

Throughout the three weeks

of which the project had consumed my mind, I woke up every day looking forward to the time that I would inevitably spend in the Makerspace. I shifted my typical work rhythms to be in the shop during regular hours when I knew that Ren and Eric would be there for support and conversation as I hunched over the sewing machine and leaped from table to table crafting the stars and stripes. By the end of the first week, I was womansplaining – really, educating – the technicians and other students around about the sewing machine: “You threaded this wrong,” and “Is your bobbin too loose?”

The most difficult part of my flag was the 13 stars. Ren, Eric and Greg were all there to help me through the process. Several prototypes were made, and the most successful was the result of a pattern that Eric and I laser-cut out of cardstock in the Makerspace. I used them to map out the field of the flag and then to sew the stars themselves. After making the pattern, Eric engraved a tag of wood that spelled the letters of my name in elements of the periodic table. He told me that it is a “frequent flier” tag, a special achievement



PHOTO BY KIRA BRETSKY '27.

The field of the flag at the Makerspace’s sewing machine.

endowed to the most consistently recurring visitors of the Makerspace. Just like his, my frequent flier tag hangs from a zipper pull on my backpack.

I completed my flag blanket, which I have dubbed “The Bretsky Ross Flag” on April 17. I paraded my work around campus like a total dork when I left the Makerspace. To the unrelenting encouragement of Ren and Eric, I have entered the Bretsky Ross Flag into the Makerspace Innovation Challenge under the Decorative category. The winners of the challenge will be announced in the Makerspace at 5 P.M. on Friday, April 26, where they will receive the world’s ugliest 3-D printed trophy named George. I

hope I win one.

Right now, Makerspace technicians and students alike do not know what the space’s staffing will look like next year. It is possible that it will be run entirely by students without the presence and essential support of technicians like Ren and Eric. This means that the Provost may decide to eliminate the position as a whole. Without its technicians, the Makerspace would not have had the tremendous impact on my life that is so evident after just three weeks. They are vital to the Makerspace as a resource and Muhlenberg as an institution.

Eric likes to say that students who enter the Makerspace leave

the traits that identify them in an educational setting at the door; everyone in the shop is a Creator no matter their major, campus leadership, or social standing. I argue that students who leave the Makerspace inevitably add Creator to their identities, no matter their machine proficiency in the shop.

My story is one of countless students who have been positively impacted by the Makerspace and its technicians. Keeping their presence on campus, though it means that I will probably have to hear the same story about tap dancers from Eric several more times, will be a much bigger win than any prize from the Innovation Challenge.

Anyone can be a fan

By KATIE SNYDER AND EMMA GOBORA
ROOKIE WRITERS

Tailgating, cheering, seeing your favorite players in person or on a screen, the pride you feel when your team scores: All of these things are exciting parts of being a sports fan, or at least they should be. But for some female sports fans, joining in the enthusiasm of watching or talking about sports means enduring demeaning comments or accusations of being a fake fan.

Taylor Swift's appearances at last season's NFL games to cheer on her boyfriend Travis Kelce increased the number of women watching football, a phenomenon that became known as the "Swift Effect." However, many of the fans that are watching have not just started watching because of Swift, but because they have a real interest in the game. A headline from the Daily Beast read, "Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce are Forcing Girls To Care About Football." Although there is a high percentage of female sports fans, this does not prevent them from being patronized, even when they may be extremely knowledgeable and have experience in athletics. The idea of women not being seen as true fans is not new, though, as women have frequently felt unwelcome in the stands.

Phoebe Unger '24 is an avid Milwaukee Bucks fan and has faced criticism in the past. "Whenever I say that I am a fan of the Bucks, especially to guys, they always make fun of me,"

Unger says. "They always say I know one player when I really know the whole team. They also mansplain terms to me as if I don't know anything."

Unfortunately, Unger is not the only one. Surveys found that 20 percent of female respondents said they were called a "fake fan," while 60 percent of NFL fans said they have experienced someone "mansplaining" the game.

While women make up a large portion of fans, 55 percent of female fans would rather watch games at home rather than in person or at sports bars, likely because they feel unwelcome or unsafe at sporting events. In addition, 30 percent of female NFL fans reported experiencing disrespect at games. This could be from not being taken seriously, and being quizzed on their knowledge of the game.

The feelings of exclusion for women in male-dominated activities are not exclusive to sports, as women have also been struggling to feel included in online gaming spaces. For example, Gamergate was an "internet culture war" where independent game-makers and critics, mostly women, advocated for inclusion in gaming, while others were pushing for the more stereotypical gamers to still be in control. Many female gamers received highly graphic and disturbing threats and were attacked on these online platforms. The website Breitbart described Gamergate with the headline, "Feminist bullies tearing the video game industry apart."

On social media platforms, such as TikTok, women are speaking out about their experiences of being fans. One TikTok user under the name Sweettannieod made a video called "Things girls who love sports are TIRED of hearing." In the video, Annie discusses how women get quizzed to prove their knowledge of the sport, being mansplained about the sport, and saying that girls only like the sport or team because the players are attractive.

In the comments of the video, other TikTok users talk about their own experiences and even use satire to prove the severity of toxicity in the sports fanbase as a relevant problem. One user comments, "Ok, but if he's your favorite player what's his blood type and social security number?" and other users comment back with, "Oh, you don't know? Then you're a FAKE FAN and

BANDWAGON!"

The Detroit Pistons left a positive comment, saying, "You don't need to prove anything to us," with a red heart emoji. Teams such as the Detroit Pistons give women in sports fan bases hope that they can enjoy the sport without being questioned by men to prove their fandom.

Whether it is sports or online gaming, women can be seen as "others" when it comes to male-dominated spaces, but they have turned to social media to reclaim their place as fans.

Women in the sports fan community fear that they will always be faced with misogynistic and sexist comments when it comes to liking a sport. Talking about their own experiences and the toxicity in the sports fanbase can bring recognition to the problem.

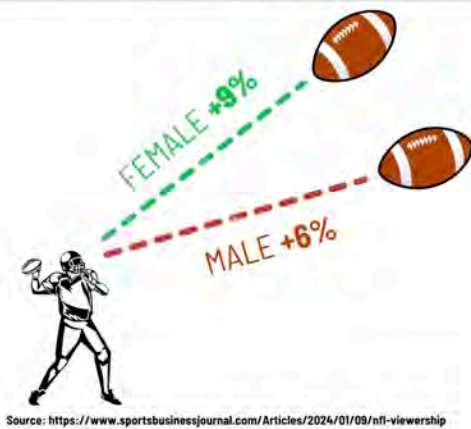
But the truth of the matter is

this; it is okay not to know the entire lineup of the 2009 Dallas Cowboys. It is okay not to know who won the 2005 MLB World Series. It is okay not to know some of the players. It is okay not to know everything about a male-dominated sport.

However, it is not okay to make one feel lesser than you for asking a question. It is not okay for you to question someone else's true fandom when they show interest in the sport. And it is not okay to do these things to a woman when you would not do this to a man.

So, instead of excluding and criticizing women for becoming a fan of your sport or team, be excited that your sport and team is growing in numbers in its fanbase. Be excited to have someone new to talk about this similar interest. Be excited about being a part of a community that should be welcoming.

Male Vs Female Viewership for the 2023 Season Among Adults 18-34



Infographic by Emma Gobora '24 and Katelyn Snyder '27.

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By EVAN SCHLOTTERBECK
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

About 30 minutes into an interview with Muhlenberg’s Cross Country and Track & Field Head Coach Brad Hackett, he received a phone call and respectfully asked if he could take it. I patiently waited as he facilitated his conversation, deliberately trying not to listen, but within the confines of his office, it was impossible not to. One of Hackett’s student-athletes had called him needing some help, and without hesitation, he absorbed the dilemma, swiveled over to his computer, sent the student-athlete what they needed and assured them that things would work out, meaning they would be able to compete later that day. The entire interaction, handled with composure and emotional intelligence, summarizes who Hackett is as a coach, a leader and most notably, a person.

An empathetic and compassionate individual, Hackett first became head coach of Muhlenberg track & field in 1999, when he was made aware of the opening while an assistant coach at Syracuse University. Sure, it was the sport he loved, but a few figures coaxed him into applying and eventually accepting the position, including former Muhlenberg President Arthur Taylor along with his brother. Hackett cites Taylor’s tenacity and pure-winner mentality as enough influence to sway him to at least consider the position, yet it was the feeling on campus that set Hackett’s mind in stone.

“I think [when] most people come here, there’s something about it,” said Hackett. “The day I came here from my job interview, I couldn’t put my finger on what it was. Nor can I explain it fully to recruits. And I think that’s, you know, when you’re either a student or an employee, when you get here and you find that out, it’s like okay, this is where I want to be.”

Once Hackett did officially arrive, the program took a dramatic turn in the right direction. The teams went from finishing bottom of the barrel in the Centennial Conference (CC) to finishing no lower than fourth during Hackett’s first year. From then on, Muhlenberg track & field has seen NCAA qualifiers 21 of the last 23 years, numerous CC gold

medalists and a women’s outdoor track and field CC championship team. To craft winners is one thing, but to change a program’s trajectory is a feat that many cannot achieve. Hackett, however, found a formula that worked and synthesized himself, as a coach, to get the most out of every student-athlete who came through the program.

“Whether it was somebody that was an All-American, or somebody that never even qualified for the conference championship because everybody brings something to the table,” commented Hackett. “The year that we won the conference meeting, outdoor track on the women’s side. There were six or seven sophomores who scored a lot of the points. All those kids were hosted [on their prospective visit] by the same person. Lauren was her name. Lauren never qualified for the conference championship. But Lauren is as significant of a part of this program as there ever has been.”

That story about Lauren epitomizes how Hackett has molded his perspective while at Muhlenberg. He emits an empathetic and humane energy, with a keen ability to recognize student-athletes as people first. Although Hackett has seen countless supremely talented runners, throwers and jumpers achieve great things, something he is even more proud of lies below the surface.

“What I’ll remember is that we’ve had over 50 kids on the team go to medical school since I’ve been here,” said Hackett. “We’ve had nine that have gone to dental school and I think we’ve had seven that have gone to a veterinarian school. And it’s the people... I think that’s what my brother meant all those years ago. When I was at Syracuse for ten years, I thought ‘This is it.’ I’ve made it, you know, But from a personal standpoint, it wasn’t satisfying. And I think that’s what I discovered when I came here. There’s more to this than the athletic component.”

It is one thing to truly believe that and to consider it a personal value, but to embody it in a team environment and inside a collective mindset speaks volumes. At times, it can be hard to articulate a philosophy of anything—the way humans do things is so nuanced and particular. Hackett, however, was moved by a spe-



Track coach Brad Hackett announces at an invitational in 2018.

cific moment when he was an athlete at Colgate. During his sophomore year, he had to leave a team trip in Bermuda to be with his family, and he will never forget the way his coach handled the entire situation.

“I don’t know how my college coach did it,” explained Hackett. “But he got me off that island. And he got me back home. There’s no one else I’d rather have told me that, other than a family member, than my college coach. And I’ve never forgotten that. And so I always said to myself, if I’m ever in a situation remotely as uncomfortable as that and I can handle it half as well as he handled it with me, then I’m a successful coach. Because I will always say that to people when I’m recruiting them. To me, when I think I’m doing my job the best is when somebody’s in my office crying because they are comfortable enough with me that they’re willing to open up and share with me when they’re hurt.”

Hackett continued, “I realized I was an educator, not a coach. Or how most people perceive a coach. You know, the guy with a whistle around his neck in sweatpants that is barking at practice. In order to fully believe in your coach, you have to trust them and in order to trust a coach, you have to trust them as a human being. And so that’s the bond

that goes well beyond, you know, X’s and O’s or whatever you want to call it. You have to be capable of doing that. You have to be capable of understanding that there are things that are significantly more important than your sport, whether it’s the loss of a loved one or whether it’s a religious holiday or whatever it is that you’ve got to be flexible in that regard.”

In reflection, it is easy to point to the tangibles. In this case, the wins, losses, medals and qualifications. Yet that is not what stands out most about Hackett. For him, it is most clearly about the environment that a coach can help create and maintain amongst a group of people— an environment that drives success from the inside out. When a student-athlete feels supported in their growth as a human being, their performance unequivocally matches that growth. Hackett believes coaching, and all that comes with it, was his calling, and to be the catalyst for such an atmosphere, which he considers more than a family, is an accomplishment unlike any other.

The moment Hackett will hand in his keys may be approaching, but there is no doubt he is still all-in as the end of the 2024 outdoor track & field season runs parallel with his final days at Muhlenberg. Hackett’s persona is one of compassion,

respect and a holistic sense of confidence in identity. He has been there and done that, adapted accordingly, and instilled his wisdom into the strong-minded, charitable attitudes of his student-athletes. And attitude reflects leadership.

“I owe everything to Muhlenberg. I owe my family to Muhlenberg. And I never thought I would wind up in Eastern Pennsylvania. But, you know, this school and I’m guessing the 600 people that have been on a team since I’ve been here, I owe them everything. And whether any of them realize that or not, I owe them everything.”

As the Muhlenberg community bids farewell to someone who has been a foundational piece over the last 25 years, Coach Hackett’s impressions are eager to reverberate throughout the 82-acre campus in the near and distant future.

Yet, legacy itself can be tricky at times, paradoxically revealing complexities left for those yet to leave a legacy of their own to interpret. Above his extensive coaching feats, Hackett is an exemplar of nurturing the human spirit into its vulnerable and ceaseless self, a type of legacy that can keep the heartbeat of any person, group or place steadfast regardless of physical presence.

Coming up this week in

SPORTS

Apr. 25 - May 1

Baseball

MUHLENBERG at URSINUS

Fri, Apr. 26 @ 3:30 p.m.
Collegeville, Pa

Softball

MUHLENBERG at MCDANIEL

Sat, Apr. 27 @ 1:00 & 3:00 p.m.
Cedarcreek Field

Golf

MUHLENBERG vs CENTENNIAL CONFERENCE

Sun, Apr. 28 @ 12:00 p.m.
Waynesboro Country Club

Mens Track

MUHLENBERG vs PENN RELAYS

Apr. 25 - 27
Philadelphia, PA